1607/55.

EVERY ONE HAS HIS FAULT:

A

COMEDY,

IN FIVE ACTS,

AS IT IS PERFORMED AT THE

THEATRE-ROYAL, COVENT-GARDEN.

BY

Mrs. INCHBALD.

DUBLIN:

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M,DCC,XCIII.

BRITISH MUSEUM
15
67
MAY

PROLOGUE.

By the Rev. Mr. NARES.

Spoken by Mr. FARREN.

OUR Author, who accuſes great and ſmall,
And ſays ſo boldly, there are faults in all;
Sends me with diſmal voice, and lengthen'd phiz,
Humbly to own one dreadful fault of his:
A fault, in modern Authors not uncommon,
It is,—now don't be angry—He's—*a woman.*

Can you forgive it? Nay, I'll tell you more,
One who has dar'd to venture here before;
Has ſeen your ſmiles, your frowns,—tremendous ſight!
O, be not in a frowning mood to-night!
The Play, perhaps, has many things amiſs:
Well, let us then reduce the point to this,
Let only thoſe that have no failings, hiſs.

The Rights of Women, ſays a female pen,
Are, to do every thing as well as Men.
To think, to argue, to decide, to write,
To talk, undoubtedly—perhaps, to fight.
[For Females march to war, like brave Commanders,
Not in old Authors only—but in Flanders.]

grant this matter may be ſtrain'd too far,
And Maid 'gainſt Man is moſt uncivil war:
I grant, as all my City friends will ſay,
That Men ſhould rule, and Women ſhould obey:
That nothing binds the marriage contract faſter,
Than our—a "Zounds, Madam, I'm your Lord and Maſter."
I grant their nature, and their frailty ſuch,
Women may make too free—and know too much.
But ſince the Sex at length has been inclin'd
To cultivate that uſeful part—the mind;—
Since they have learnt to read, to write, to ſpell;—
Since ſome of them have wit,—and uſe it well;—
Let us not force them back with brow ſevere,
Within the pale of ignorance and fear,

Confin'd

PROLOGUE.

Confin'd entirely to domeſtic arts,
Producing only children, pies, and tarts.
The fav'rite fable of the tuneful Nine,
Implies that female genius *is divine.*

Then, drive not, Critics, with tyrannic rage,
A ſupplicating Fair-one from the Stage;
The Comic Muſe perhaps is growing old,
Her lovers, you well know, are few and cold.
'Tis time then freely to enlarge the plan,
And let all thoſe write Comedies—that can.

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

MEN.

Lord Norland	—	Mr. FARREN.
Sir Robert Ramble	—	Mr. LEWIS.
Mr. Solus	—	Mr. QUICK.
Mr. Harmony	—	Mr. MUNDEN.
Mr. Placid	—	Mr. FAWCETT.
Mr. Irwin	—	Mr. POPE.
Hammond	—	Mr. POWELL.
Porter	—	Mr. THOMPSON.
Edward	—	Miſs GRIST.

WOMEN.

Lady Eleanor Irwin	—	Mrs. POPE.
Mrs. Placid	—	Mrs. MATTOCKS.
Miſs Spinſter	—	Mrs. WEBB.
Miſs Wooburn	—	Mrs. ESTEN.

Servants, &c.

SCENE, London.

BRITISH MUSEUM 15 67 MAY

EVERY ONE HAS HIS FAULT:

A

COMEDY.

ACT I.

SCENE I. *An Apartment at Mr.* PLACID's.

Enter Mr. PLACID *and Mr.* SOLUS.

PLACID.

YOU are to blame.

Solus. I ſay the ſame by you.

Placid. And yet your ſingularity pleaſes me; for you are the firſt elderly bachelor I ever knew, who did not hug himſelf in the reflection, that he was not in the trammels of wedlock.

Placid. And you really wiſh you were married?

Solus. I do. I wiſh ſtill more, that I had been married thirty years ago. Oh! I wiſh a wife and half-a-ſcore children would now ſtart up around me, and bring along with them all that affection, which we ſhould have had for each other by being earlier acquainted. But as it is, in my preſent ſtate, there is not a perſon in the world I care a ſtraw for; and the world is pretty even with me, for I don't believe there is a creature in it who cares a ſtraw for me.

Placid. Pihaw! You have in your time been a man of gallantry; and, conſequently, muſt have made many attachments.

Solus. Yes, ſuch as men of gallantry uſually make. I have been attached to women who have purloined my fortune, and to men who have partaken of the theft: I have been in as much fear of my miſtreſs as you are of your wife.

Placid. Is that poſſible?

Solus. Yes; and without having one of thoſe tender, delicate ties of a huſband, an excuſe for my apprehenſion.—I have maintained children——

Placid. Then why do you complain for the want of a family?

Solus. I did not ſay I ever had any children; I ſaid I had *maintained* them; but I never believed they were mine; for I could have no dependance upon the principles of their mother—and never did I take one of thoſe tender infants in my arms, that the forehead of my Valet, the ſquint-eye of my Apothecary, or the double chin of my Chaplain, did not ſtare me in the face, and damp all the fine feelings of the parent, which I had juſt called up.

Placid But thoſe are accidents which may occur in the marriage ſtate

Solus In that caſe, a man is pitied—in mine, he is only laughed at.

Placid. I wiſh to heaven I could exchange the pity which my friends beſtow on me, for the merriment which your ill fate excites.

Solus. You want but courage to be envied.

Placid. Does any one doubt my courage?

Solus. No. If a Prince were to offend you, you would challenge him, I have no doubt.

Placid. But if my wife offend me, I am obliged to make an apology.—Was not that her voice? I hope ſhe has not overheard our converſation.

Solus. If ſhe have, ſhe'll be in an ill humour.

Placid. That ſhe will be, whether ſhe have heard it or not.

Solus.

Solus. Well, good day. I don't like to be driven from my fixed plan of wedlock; and, therefore, I won't be a ſpectator of your mutual diſcontent.

[*Going.*

Placid. But, before you go, Mr. Solus, permit me to remind you of a certain concern, that, I think, would afford you much more delight, than all you can, at this time of life, propoſe to yourſelf in marriage. Make happy by your beneficence, a near relation whom the trueſt affection has drawn into that ſtate, but who is denied the bleſſing of competency to make the ſtate ſupportable.

Solus. You mean my nephew, Irwin? But do not you acknowledge he has a wife and children? Did not he marry the woman he loved, and has he not, at this moment, a large family, by whom he is beloved? And is he not, therefore, with all his poverty, much happier than I? He has often told me, when I have reproached him with his indiſcreet marriage, "that in his wife he poſſeſſed kingdoms!" Do you ſuppoſe I will give any part of my fortune to a man who enjoys ſuch extenſive domains? No:—let him preſerve his territories, and I will keep my little eſtate for my own uſe. [*Exit.*

Placid. John! John!—[*Enter Servant.*] Has your miſtreſs been enquiring for me?

John. Yes, Sir:—My Lady aſked juſt now, if I knew who was with you?

Placid. Did ſhe ſeem angry?

John. No, Sir;—pretty well.

Placid. You ſcoundrel, what do you mean by "pretty well?" [*In anger.*]

John. Much as uſual, Sir.

Placid. And do you call that "pretty well?" You ſcoundrel, I have a great mind——

Enter Mrs. PLACID, *ſpeaking very loud.*

Mrs. Placid. What is the matter, Mr. Placid? What is all this noiſe about? You know I hate a noiſe. What is the matter?

Placid. Pſhaw! You have in your time been a man of gallantry; and, conſequently, muſt have made many attachments.

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Placid. John! John!—[*Enter Servant*] Has your miſtreſs been enquiring for me?

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John. No, Sir;—pretty well.

Placid. You ſcoundrel, what do you mean by "pretty well?" [*In anger.*]

John. Much as uſual, Sir.

Placid. And do you call that "pretty well?" You ſcoundrel, I have a great mind——

Enter Mrs. PLACID, *ſpeaking very loud.*

Mrs. Placid. What is the matter, Mr. Placid? What is all this noiſe about? You know I hate a noiſe. What is the matter?

Placid. My dear, I was only finding fault with that blockhead.

Mrs. Placid. Pray, Mr. Placid, do not find fault with any body in this houſe. But I have ſomething which I muſt take *you* very ſeverely to taſk about, Sir.

Placid. No, my dear, not juſt now, pray.

Mrs. Placid. Why not now?

Placid, looking at his watch. Becauſe dinner will be ready in a few minutes. I am very hungry, and it will be cruel of you to ſpoil my appetite. John, is the dinner on table?

Mrs. Placid. No, John, don't let it be ſerved yet —Mr. Placid, you *ſhall* firſt hear what I have to ſay.

[*Sitting down.*

[*Exit Servant.*

Placid. But then I know I ſhan't be able to eat a morſel.

Mrs. Placid. Sit down. [*He ſits*]—I believe, Mr. Placid, you are going to do a very ſilly thing. I am afraid you are going to lend ſome money?

Placid. Well, my dear, and ſuppoſe I am?

Mrs. Placid. Then, I don't approve of people lending their money.

Placid. But, my dear, I have known you approve of borrowing money: And, once in our lives, what ſhould we have done, if every body had refuſed to lend?

Mrs. Placid. That is nothing to the purpoſe.—And now I deſire you will hear what I ſay, without ſpeaking a word yourſelf.

Placid. Well, my dear.

Mrs. Placid. Now mind you don't ſpeak, till I have done.—Our old acquaintance, Captain Irwin, Lady Eleanor, his wife (with whom we lived upon very intimate terms, to be ſure, while we were in America), are returned to England; and I find you have viſited them very frequently.

Placid. Not above two or three times, upon my word; for it hurts me to ſee them in diſtreſs, and I forbear to go.

Mrs. Placid.

Mrs. Placid. There! You own they are in diſtreſs; I expected as much. Now, own to me that they aſked you to lend them money.

Placid. I do own it—I do own it. Now are you ſatisfied?

Mrs. Placid. No: for I have no doubt but you have promiſed they ſhall have it.

Placid. No, upon my word, I have not promiſed.

Mrs. Placid. Then promiſe me they ſhall not.

Placid. Nay, my dear, you have no idea of their diſtreſs!

Mrs. Placid. Yes, I have; and 'tis that which makes me ſuſpicious

Placid. His regiment is now broken; all her jewels and little bawbles are diſpoſed of; he is in ſuch dread of his old creditors, that, in the lodging they have taken, he paſſes by the name of Middleton—They have three more children, my dear, than when we left them in New England; and they have in vain ſent repeated ſupplications, both to his uncle, and her father, for the ſmalleſt bounty.

Mrs. Placid. And is not Lord Norland, her father, a remarkably wiſe man? and a good man? And ought you to do for them, what he has refuſed?

Placid. They have offended him, but they have never offended me.

Mrs. Placid. I think 'tis an offence to aſk a friend for money, when there is no certainty of returning it.

Placid By no means: for, if there *were* a certainty, even an enemy might lend.

Mrs. Placid. But I inſiſt, Mr. Placid, that they ſhall not find a friend in you upon this occaſion.—What do you ſay, Sir?

Placid, after a ſtruggle. No, my dear, they ſhall not.

Mrs Placid. Poſitively ſhall not?

Placid. Poſitively ſhall not—ſince they have found an enemy in you.

Enter SERVANT.

Servant. Dinner is on table.

Placid Ah! I am not hungry now.

Mrs. Placid. What do you mean by that, Mr. Placid? I inſiſt on your being hungry.

Placid. Oh yes! I have a very excellent appetite. I ſhall eat prodigiouſly.

Mrs. Placid. You had beſt. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE II. *An Apartment at Mr.* HARMONY'S.

Enter Mr. HARMONY *followed by Miſs* SPINSTER.

Miſs Spinſter. Couſin, couſin Harmony, I will not forgive you for thus continually ſpeaking in the behalf of every ſervant whom you find me offended with. Your philanthropy becomes inſupportable; and, inſtead of being a virtue, degenerates into a vice.

Harmony Dear Madam, do not upbraid me for a conſtitutional fault.

Miſs Spinſter Very true; you had it from your infancy. I have heard your mother ſay you were always fooliſhly tender-hearted, and never ſhewed one of thoſe diſcriminating paſſions of envy, hatred, or revenge, to which all her other children were liable.

Harmony. No: ſince I can remember, I have felt the moſt unbounded affection for all my fellow-creatures. I even proteſt to you, dear Madam, that, as I walk along the ſtreets of this large metropolis, ſo warm is my heart towards every perſon who paſſes me, that I long to ſay, "How do you do?" and "I am glad to ſee you," to them all. Some men, I ſhould like even to ſtop and ſhake hands with;—and ſome women, I ſhould like even to ſtop and kiſs.

Miſs Spinſter. How can you be ſo ridiculous!

Harmony. Nay, 'tis truth: and I ſincerely lament that human beings ſhould be ſuch ſtrangers to one another as we are. We live in the ſame ſtreet, without knowing one another's neceſſities; and oftentimes meet and part from each other at church, at coffee-houſes, play houſes, and all public places, without ever ſpeaking a ſingle word, or nodding "Good bye!" though 'tis a hundred chances to ten we never ſee one another again.

Miſs

Miſs Spinſter. Let me tell you, kinſman, all this pretended philanthropy renders you ridiculous.—— There is not a fraud, a theft, or hardly any vice committed, that you do not take the criminal's part, ſhake your head, and cry, "Proviſions are ſo ſcarce!" And no longer ago than laſt Lord-mayor's day, when you were told that Mr. Alderman Ravenous was ill with an indigeſtion, you endeavoured to ſoften the matter, by exclaiming, "Proviſions are ſo ſcarce!" —But, above all, I condemn the falſe humanity, which induces you to ſay many things in converſation which deſerve to ſtigmatize you with the character of deceit.

Harmony. This is a weakneſs I confeſs But though my honour ſometimes reproaches me with it as a fault, my conſcience never does: for it is by this very failing that I have frequently made the bittereſt enemies friends—Juſt by ſaying a few harmleſs ſentences, which, though a ſpecies of falſehood and deceit, yet, being ſoothing and acceptable to the perſon offended, I have immediately inſpired him with lenity and forgiveneſs; and then, by only repeating the ſelf-ſame ſentences to his opponent, I have known hearts cold and cloſed to each other, warmed and expanded, as every human creature's ought to be.

Enter SERVANT.

Servant. Mr. Solus [*Exit Servant.*

Miſs Spinſter. I cannot think, Mr. Harmony, why you keep company with that old bachelor; he is a man, of all others on earth, I diſlike; and ſo I am obliged to quit the room, though I have a thouſand things to ſay. [*Exit angrily.*

Enter SOLUS.

Harmony. Mr. Solus, how do you do?

Solus I am very lonely at home; will you come and dine with me?

Harmony. Now you are here, you had better ſtay with me: we have no company; only my couſin Miſs Spinſter and myſelf.

Solus. No, I muſt go home: do come to my houſe.

Harmony.

Harmony. Nay, pray ſtay: what objection can you have?

Solus. Why, to tell you the truth, your relation, Miſs Spinſter, is no great favourite of mine; and I don't like to dine with you, becauſe I don't like her company.

Harmony. That is, to me, ſurprizing!

Solus. Why, old bachelors and old maids never agree: we are too much alike in our habits: we know our own hearts ſo well, we are apt to diſcover every foible we would wiſh to forget, in the ſymptoms diſplayed by the other. Miſs Spinſter is peeviſh, fretful and tireſome, and I am always in a fidget when I am in her company.

Harmony. How different are her ſentiments of you! for one of her greateſt joys is to be in your company. [Solus *ſtarts and ſmiles*] Poor woman! ſhe has, to be ſure, an uneven temper—

Solus. No, perhaps I am miſtaken.

Harmony. —But I will aſſure you, I never ſee her in half ſuch good humour as when you are here: for I believe you are the greateſt favourite ſhe has.

Solus. I am very much obliged to her, and I certainly *am* miſtaken about her temper—Some people, if they look ever ſo croſs, are good-natured in the main; and I dare ſay ſhe is ſo. Beſides, ſhe never has had a huſband to ſooth and ſoften her diſpoſition; and there ſhould be ſome allowance made for that.

Harmony. Will you dine with us?

Solus. I don't care if I do. Yes, I think I will. I muſt however ſtep home firſt: but I'll be back in a quarter of an hour.—My compliments to Miſs Spinſter, if you ſhould ſee her before I return. [*Exit.*

Enter SERVANT.

Servant. My lady begs to know, Sir, if you have invited Mr. Solus to dine? becauſe if you have, ſhe ſhall go out. [*Exit Servant.*

Enter Miſs SPINSTER.

Harmony. Yes, Madam, I could not help inviting him; for, poor man, his own houſe is in ſuch a ſtate

for

for want of proper management, he cannot give a comfortable dinner himſelf.

Miſs Spinſter. And ſo he muſt ſpoil the comfort of mine.

Harmony. Poor man! poor man! after all the praiſes he has been laviſhing upon you.

Miſs Spinſter. What praiſes?

Harmony. I won't tell you; for you won't believe them.

Miſs Spinſter. Yes, I ſhall.—Oh no—now I recollect, this is ſome of your invention.

Harmony. Nay, I told him it was *his* invention: for he declared you looked better laſt night, than any other lady at the Opera.

Miſs Spinſter. No, this ſounds like truth:—and depend upon it, though I never liked the manners of Mr. Solus much, yet—

Harmony. Nay, Solus has his faults.

Miſs Spinſter. So we have all.

Harmony. And will you leave him and me to dine by ourſelves?

Miſs Spinſter. Oh no, I cannot be guilty of ſuch ill manners, though I talked of it. Beſides, poor Mr. Solus does not come ſo often, and it would be wrong not to ſhew him all the civility we can. For my part, I have no diſlike to the man; and, if taking a bit of dinner with us now and then can oblige either you or him, I ſhould be to blame to make any objection. Come; let us go into the drawing-room to receive him.

Harmony. Ay! this is right: this is as it ſhould be. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE III. *A Room at the Lodgings of Mr.* IRWIN.

Mr. IRWIN *and Lady* ELEANOR IRWIN *diſcovered.*

Lady Eleanor. My dear huſband, my dear Irwin, I cannot bear to ſee you thus melancholy. Is this the joy of returning to our native country after a nine years baniſhment?

Irwin.

Irwin. Yes. For I could bear my misfortunes, my wretched poverty with patience, in a land where our ſorrows were ſhared by thoſe about us; but here, in London, where plenty and eaſe ſmile upon every face; where, by birth you claim diſtinction, and I by ſervices:—here to be in want,—to be obliged to take another name in ſhame of our own,—to tremble at the voice of every ſtranger, for fear he ſhould be a creditor,—to meet each old acquaintance with an averted eye, becauſe we would not feel the pang of being ſhunned —To have no reward for all this, even in a comfortable home; but there, to ſee our children looking up to me for that ſupport I have not in my power to give—Can I,—can I love them and you, and not be miſerable?

Lady Eleanor. And yet I am not ſo. And I am ſure you will not doubt my love to you or them.

Irwin. I met my uncle this morning, and was mean enough to repeat my requeſt to him;—he burſt into a fit of laughter, and told me my diſtreſſes were the reſult of my ambition, in marrying the daughter of a nobleman, who himſelf was too ambitious ever to pardon us.

Lady Eleanor. Tell me no more of what he ſaid.

Irwin. This was a day of trials:—I ſaw your father too.

Lady Eleanor. My father! Lord Norland! Oh Heaven!

Irwin. He paſſed me in his carriage.

Lady Eleanor. I envy you the bleſſing of ſeeing him! For, Oh!—Excuſe my tears—he is my father ſtill —How did he look?

Irwin As well as he did at the time I uſed to watch him from his houſe, to ſteal to you.—But I am ſorry to acquaint you, that, to guard himſelf againſt all returning love for you, he has, I am informed, adopted a young lad, on whom he beſtows every mark of that paternal affection, of which you lament the loſs.

Lady Eleanor. May the young man deſerve his tenderneſs better than I have done—May he never diſobey

obey him—May *he* be a comfort, and cherish his benefactor's declining years—And when his youthful passions teach him to love, may they not, like mine, teach him disobedience!

Enter a SERVANT *with a letter.*

Irwin. What is that letter?

Servant. It comes from Mr. Placid, the servant who brought it, said, and requires no answer. [*Exit.*

Irwin. It's strange how I tremble at every letter I see, as if I dreaded the contents. How poverty has unmann'd me! [*aside*]—I must tell you, my dear, that finding myself left this morning without a guinea, I wrote to Mr. Placid to borrow a small sum. This is his answer: [*reading the superscription*] "To Mr. Middleton"—That's right;—he remembers the caution I gave him. I had forgot whether I had, for my memory is not so good as it was. I did not even recollect this hand, though it is one I am so well acquainted with, and ought to give me joy rather than sorrow [*Opens the letter hastily, reads, and lets it drop*]. Now I have not a friend on earth.

Lady Eleanor. Yes, you have me. You forget me.

Irwin, in a transport of grief. I would forget you—you—and all your children.

Lady Eleanor. I would not lose the remembrance of you, or of them, for all my father's fortune.

Irwin. What am I to do? I must leave you! I must go, I know not where! I cannot stay to see you perish. [*Takes his hat, and is going*]

Lady Eleanor, holding him. Where would you go? 'Tis evening—'tis dark—Whither would you go at this time?

Irwin, distractedly. I must consider what's to be done—and in this room my thoughts are too confined to reflect.

Lady Eleanor. And are London streets calculated for reflection?

Irwin.

Irwin. No;—for action.—To hurry the faint thought to resolution.

Lady Eleanor. You are not well—Your health has been lately impaired.—Your temper has undergone a change too.—I tremble left any accident—

Irwin. What accident? [*Wildly*]

Lady Eleanor. I know your provocations from an ungrateful world: But despise it, as that despises you.

Irwin. But for your sake, I could.

Lady Eleanor. Then witness, Heaven! I am happy.—Though bred in all the delicacy, the luxury of wealth and splendour; yet I have never murmured at the change of fortune, while that change has made me wife to you, and mother of your children.

Irwin. We *will* be happy—if possible. But give me this evening to consider what plan to fix upon.—There is no time to lose; we are without friends—without money—without credit.—Farewell for an hour.—I will see Mr. Placid, if I can; and though he have not the money to lend, he may, perhaps, give me some advice.

Lady Eleanor. Suppose I call on *her?* Women are more considerate than men, and—

Irwin Do you for the best, and so will I—Heavens bless you' [*Exeunt separately.*

ACT

ACT II.

SCENE I. *A Coffee or Club-room at a Tavern.*

Enter Sir ROBERT RAMBLE—*and Mr.* SOLUS *and Mr.* PLACID *at the oppoſite Side.*

Solus. Sir Robert Ramble, how do you do?

Sir Robert. My dear Mr. Solus, I am glad to ſee you. I have been dining by myſelf, and now come into this public room to meet with ſome good company.

Solus. Ay, Sir Robert, you are now reduced to the ſame neceſſity which I frequently am—I frequently am obliged to dine at taverns and coffee-houſes, for want of company at home.

Sir Robert. Nay, I proteſt I am never happier than in a houſe like this, where a man may meet his friend without the inconvenience of form, either as a hoſt or a viſitor.

Solus. Sir Robert, give me leave to introduce to you Mr. Placid: he has been many years abroad; but I believe he now means to remain in his own country for the reſt of his life. This, Mr. Placid, is Sir Robert Ramble.

Sir Robert, to Mr. Placid Sir, I ſhall be happy in your acquaintance; and I aſſure you, if you will do me the honour to meet me now and then at this houſe, you will find every thing very pleaſant. I verily believe, that ſince I loſt my wife, which is now about five months ago, I verily believe I have dined here three days out of the ſeven.

Placid. Have you loſt your wife, Sir? And ſo lately?

Sir Robert, with great indifference. Yes, Sir; about five months ago—Is it not, Mr. Solus? You keep account of ſuch things better than I do.

Solus. Oh! aſk me no queſtions about your wife, Sir Robert; if ſhe had been mine, I would have had her to this moment.

Placid. What, wreſted her from the gripe of death?

Sir Robert. No, Sir; only from the gripe of the Scotch lawyers.

Solus. More ſhame for you. Shame! to wiſh to be divorced from a virtuous wife.

Placid. Was that the caſe? Divorced from a virtuous wife! I never heard of ſuch a circumſtance before. Pray, Sir Robert [*very anxiouſly*], will you indulge me, by letting me know in what manner you were able to bring about ſo great an event?

Sir Robert. It may appear ſtrange to you, Sir; but my wife and I did not live happy together.

Placid. Not at all ſtrange, Sir; I can conceive—I can conceive very well.

Solus. Yes; he can conceive that part to a nicety.

Sir Robert. And ſo, I was determined on a divorce.

Placid. But then her character could not be unimpeached.

Sir Robert. Yes, it was, Sir. You muſt know, we were married in Scotland, and by the laws there, a wife can divorce her *huſband* for breach of fidelity; and ſo, though my wife's character was unimpeached, mine was not, and ſhe divorced me.

Placid. And is this the law in Scotland?

Sir Robert. It is. Bleſſed, bleſſed country! that will bind young people together before the years of diſcretion—and, as ſoon as they have diſcretion to repent, will unbind them again!

Placid. I wiſh I had been married in Scotland.

Solus. But, Sir Robert, with all this boaſting, you muſt own that your divorce has greatly diminiſhed your fortune.

Sir Robert, taking Solus aſide. Mr. Solus, you have frequently hinted at my fortune being impaired; but I do not approve of ſuch notions being received abroad.

Solus I beg your pardon; but every body knows that you have played very deep lately, and have been a great loſer, and every body knows——

Sir

Sir Robert. No, Sir, every body does not know it, for I contradict the report wherever I go. A man of faſhion does not like to be reckoned poor, no more than he likes to be reckoned unhappy. We none of us endeavour to *be* happy, Sir, but merely to be *thought* ſo; and for my part, I had rather be in a ſtate of miſery, and envied for my ſuppoſed happineſs, than in a ſtate of happineſs, and pitied for my ſuppoſed miſery.

Solus. But conſider, theſe misfortunes which I have juſt hinted at, are not of any ſerious nature, only ſuch as a few years œconomy———

Sir Robert. But were my wife and her guardian to become acquainted with theſe little misfortunes, they would triumph in my embarraſſments.

Solus. Lady Ramble triumph! [*They join Mr.* Placid] She who was ſo firmly attached to you, that I believe nothing but a compliance with your repeated requeſt to be ſeparated, cauſed her to take the ſtep ſhe did.

Sir Robert. Yes, I believe ſhe did it to oblige me, and I am very much obliged to her.

Solus. As good a woman, Mr. Placid———

Sir Robert. Very good—but very ugly.

Solus. She is beautiful.

Sir Robert, to Solus. I tell you, Sir, ſhe is hideous. And then ſhe was grown ſo inſufferably peeviſh.

Solus. I never ſaw her out of temper.

Sir Robert. Mr. Solus, it is very uncivil of you to praiſe her before my face. Lady Ramble, at the time I parted with her, had every poſſible fault both of mind and perſon, and ſo I made love to other women in her preſence; told her bluntly that I was tired of her; that "I was very ſorry to make her uneaſy, "but that I could not love her any longer."—And was not that frank and open?

Solus. Oh! that I had but ſuch a wife as ſhe was!

Sir Robert. I muſt own I loved her myſelf when ſhe was young.

Solus. Do you call her old?

Sir Robert. In years I am certainly older than ſhe; but the difference of ſex makes her a great deal older than I am. For inſtance, Mr. Solus, you have often lamented not being married in your youth; but if you had, what would you have now done with an old wife, a woman of your own age?

Solus. Loved and cheriſhed her.

Sir Robert. What, in ſpite of her loſs of beauty?

Solus. When ſhe had loſt her beauty, moſt likely I ſhould have loſt my eye-ſight, and have been blind to the wane of her charms.

Placid anxiouſly. But, Sir Robert, you were explaining to me—Mr. Solus, give me leave to ſpeak to Sir Robert—I feel myſelf particularly intereſted on this ſubject.—And, Sir, you were explaining to me—

Sir Robert. Very true: Where did I leave off? Oh! at my ill uſage of my Lady Ramble. Yes, I did uſe her very ill, and yet ſhe loved me. Many a time, when ſhe has ſaid to me, "Sir Robert, I deteſt your principles, your manners, and even your perſon," often, at that very inſtant, I have ſeen a little ſparkle of a wiſh peep out of the corner of one eye, that has called to me, "Oh! Sir Robert, how I long to make it up with you!"

Solus, to Mr. Placid. Do not you wiſh that your wife had ſuch a little ſparkle at the corner of one of her eyes?

Sir Robert, to Mr. Placid. Sir, do you wiſh to be divorced?

Placid. I have no ſuch proſpect. Mrs. Placid is faithful, and I was married in England.

Sir Robert But if you have an unconquerable deſire to part, a ſeparate maintenance will anſwer nearly the ſame end—for if your Lady and you will only lay down the plan of ſeparation, and agree—

Placid But, unfortunately, we never do agree!

Sir Robert. Then ſpeak of parting as a thing you dread worſe than death; and make it your daily prayer to her, that ſhe will never think of going from you—She will determine upon it directly.

Placid.

Placid. I thank you; I'm very much obliged to you; I thank you a thouſand times.

Sir Robert. Yes, I have ſtudied the art of teaſing a wife; and there is nothing vexes her ſo much as laughing at her. Can you laugh, Mr. Placid?

Placid. I don't know whether I can; I have not laughed ſince I married.—But I thank you, Sir, for your inſtructions—I ſincerely thank you.

Solus. And now, Sir Robert, you have had the good nature to teach this Gentleman how to get rid of his wife, will you have the kindneſs to teach me how to procure one?

Enter Mr. IRWIN.

Sir Robert. Hah! Sure I know that Gentleman's face?

Solus. My Nephew! Let me eſcape his ſolicitations [*Aſide*]—Here, waiter! [*Exit.*

Placid. Irwin! [*Starting*] Having ſent him a denial, I am aſhamed to ſee him. *Aſide*] Here, Mr. Solus!—— [*Exit, following Mr.* SOLUS.

Irwin, aſide. More cool faces! My neceſſitous countenance clears even a club-room.

Sir Robert. My dear Captain Irwin, is it you? Yes, 'faith it is—After a nine years' abſence I moſt ſincerely rejoice to ſee you.

Irwin. Sir Robert, you ſhake hands with a cordiality I have not experienced theſe many days, and I thank you.

Sir Robert. But what's the matter? You ſeem to droop—Where have you left your uſual ſpirits? Has abſence from your country changed your manners?

Irwin. No, Sir; but I find ſome of my countrymen changed. I fancy them leſs warm, leſs friendly than they were; and it is that which, perhaps, has this effect upon me.

Sir Robert. Am I changed?

Irwin. You appear an exception.

Sir Robert. And I aſſure you, that inſtead of being grown more gloomy, I am even more gay than I was ſeven years ago; for then, I was upon the point of matrimony—but now, I am juſt relieved from its cares.

Irwin. I have heard as much. But I hope you have not taken ſo great an averſion to the marriage-ſtate, as never to marry again.

Sir Robert. Perhaps not: But then it muſt be to ſome rich heireſs.

Irwin. You are right to pay reſpect to fortune. Money is a neceſſary article in the marriage contract.

Sir Robert. As to that—that would be no great object at preſent. No, thank Heaven, my eſtates are pretty large; I have no children; I have a rich Uncle, excellent health, admirable ſpirits;—and thus happy, it would be very ſtrange if I did not meet my old friends with thoſe ſmiles, which never for a moment quit my countenance.

Irwin. In the diſpenſation of the gifts of Providence, how few are found bleſt like you! [*Sighing.*]

Sir Robert. And I aſſure you, my dear Mr. Irwin, it gives me the moſt ſerious reflections, and the moſt ſincere concern, that they are not.

Irwin. I thank you, Sir, moſt heartily: I thank you for mankind in general, and for myſelf in particular. For after this generous, unaffected declaration (with leſs ſcruple than I ſhould to any man in the world) I will own to you, that I am at this very time in the utmoſt want of an act of friendſhip.

Sir Robert, aſide. And ſo am I—Now muſt I confeſs myſelf a poor man; or paſs for an unfeeling one; and I will chooſe the latter. [*Bowing with great ceremony and coldneſs.* Any thing that I can command, is at your ſervice.

Irwin, Confounded and heſitating. Why then, Sir Robert—I am almoſt aſhamed to ſay it—but circumſtances have been rather unfavourable.—My wife's father [*affecting to ſmile*] is not reconciled to us yet—My regiment is broke—My Uncle will not part with a farthing.—Lady Eleanor, my wife, [*wipes his eyes*] has been ſupported as yet, with ſome little degree of tenderneſs,

tenderneſs, elegance; and—in ſhort, I owe a ſmall ſum which I am afraid of being troubled for; I want a trifle alſo for our immediate uſe, and if you would lend me a hundred pounds—though, upon my honour, I am not in a ſituation to fix the exact time when I can pay it.

Sir Robert. My dear Sir, never trouble yourſelf about the time of paying it, becauſe it happens not to be in my power to lend it you.

Irwin. Not in your power? I beg your pardon; but have not you this moment been ſaying you are rich?

Sir Robert. And is it not very common to be rich without money? Are not half the town rich? And yet half the town has no money. I ſpeak for this end of the town, the Weſt end. The Squares, for inſtance, part of Piccadilly, down St. James's-ſtreet, and ſo home by Pall Mall. We have all, eſtates, bonds, drafts, and notes of hand without number; but as for money, we have no ſuch thing belonging to us.

Irwin. I ſincerely beg your pardon. And be aſſured, Sir, nothing ſhould have induced me to have taken the liberty I have done, but the neceſſities of my unhappy family, and having underſtood by your own words, that you were in affluence.

Sir Robert. I *am* in affluence, I am, I am; but not in ſo much, perhaps, as my haſty, inconſiderate account may have given you reaſon to believe. I forgot to mention ſeveral heavy incumbrances, which you will perceive are great drawbacks on my fortune. —As my wife ſued for the divorce, I have her fortune to return; I have alſo two ſiſters to portion off —a circumſtance I totally forgot. But, my good friend, though I am not in circumſtances to do what you require, I will do ſomething that ſhall be better. I'll wait upon your father in law, (Lord Norland) and entreat him to forgive his daughter: and I am ſure he will if I aſk him.

Irwin. Impoſſible.

Sir

Sir Robert. And ſo it is, now I recollect: for he is no other than the guardian of my late wife, and a requeſt from me, will be received worſe than from any other perſon.—However, Mr. Irwin, depend upon it, that whenever I have an opportunity of ſerving you, I will. And whenever you ſhall do me the favour to call upon me, I ſhall be heartily glad to ſee you. If I am not at home, you can leave your card, which, you know, is all the ſame, and depend upon it, I ſhall be extremely glad to ſee you or that, at any time. [*Exit.*

Irwin. Is this my native country? Is this the hoſpitable land which we deſcribe to ſtrangers? No—We are ſavages to each other; nay worſe—The ſavage makes his fellow ſavage welcome; divides with him his homely fare; gives him the beſt apartment his hut affords, and tries to huſh thoſe griefs that are confided in his boſom—While in this civilized city, among my own countrymen, even among my brother officers in the army, and many of my neareſt relations, ſo very civilized they are, I could not take the liberty to enter under one roof, without a ceremonious invitation, and that they will not give me. I may leave my card at their door, but as for me, or any one of mine, they would not give us a dinner; unleſs, indeed, it was in ſuch a ſtyle, that we might behold with admiration their grandeur, and return ſtill more depreſſed, to our own poverty.—Can I bear this treatment longer? No, not even for you, my Eleanor. And this [*takes out a piſtol*] ſhall now be the only friend to whom I will apply—And yet I want the courage to be a villain.

Enter Mr. HARMONY, *ſpeaking as he enters.*

[Irwin *conceals the piſtol inſtantly.*]

Harmony. Let me ſee half a dozen newſpapers—Every paper of the day.

Enter

Enter WAITER.

Waiter. That is about three dozen, Sir.

Harmony. Get a couple of porters, and bring them all.

[*He ſits down; they bring him papers, and he reads*—Irwin *ſtarts, ſits down, leans his head on one of the tables, and ſhews various ſigns of uneaſineſs; then comes forward.*

Irwin. Am I a man, a ſoldier?—And a coward? Yes, I run away, I turn my back on life—I forſake the poſt, which my commander, Providence, has allotted me, and fly before a banditti of rude misfortunes. Rally me, love, connubial and parental love, rally me back to the charge! No, thoſe very affections ſound the retreat. [*Sits down with the ſame emotions of diſtraction as before.*

Harmony. That gentleman does not ſeem happy. I wiſh I had an opportunity of ſpeaking to him. [*Aſide.*

Irwin comes forward and ſpeaks again. But Oh! my wife, what will be your ſufferings when I am brought home to your wretched habitation!—And by my own hand!

Harmony. I am afraid, Sir, I engroſs all the news here. [*Holding up the papers.*

Irwin, ſtill apart. Poor ſoul, how her heart will be torn!

Harmony, after looking ſtedfaſtly on him. Captain Irwin, till this moment I had not the pleaſure of recollecting you! It is Mr. Irwin, is it not?

Irwin, His mind deranged by his misfortunes. Yes, Sir: But what have you to ſay to him more than to a ſtranger?

Harmony. Nothing more, Sir, than to apologize to you, for having addreſſed you juſt now in ſo familiar a manner, before I knew who you were; and to aſſure

assure you, that although I have no other knowledge of you, than from report, and having been once, I believe, in your company at this very house before you left England; yet, any services of mine, as far as my abilities can reach, you may freely command.

Irwin. Pray, Sir, do you live at the West end of the town?

Harmony. I do.

Irwin. Then, Sir, your services can be of no use to me.

Harmony. Here is the place where I live, here is my card.

[*Gives it to him.*

Irwin. And here is mine. And now I presume we have exchanged every act of friendship, which the strict forms of etiquette, in this town, will admit of.

Harmony. By no means, Sir. I assure you my professions never go beyond my intentions; and if there is any thing that I can serve you in—

Irwin. Have you no fillers to portion off? no lady's fortune to return? Or, perhaps, you will speak to my wife's father, and entreat him to forgive his child.

Harmony. On that subject you may command me; for I have the honour to be intimately acquainted with Lord Norland.

Irwin. But is there no reason you may recollect, "why you would be the most unfit person in the world to apply to him?"

Harmony. None. I have been honoured with marks of his friendship for many years past; and I do not know any one who could, with less hazard of his resentment, venture to name his daughter to him.

Irwin. Well, Sir, if you should see him two or three days hence, when I am set out on a journey I am going, if you will then say a kind word to him for my wife and children, I'll thank you.

Harmony. I will go to him instantly.

[*Going.*

Irwin. No, do not see him yet; stay till I am gone. He will do nothing till I am gone.

Harmony, May I ask where you are going?

Irwin.

Irwin. No very tedious journey; but it is a country, to thoſe who go without a proper paſſport, always fatal.

Harmony. I'll ſee Lord Norland to night: perhaps I may perſuade him to prevent your journey. I'll ſee him to-night, or early in the morning, depend upon it.—I am a man of my word, Sir; though I muſt own I do live at the Weſt end of the town.

[*Exit.*

Irwin. 'Sdeath, am I become the ridicule of my fellow-creatures? or am I not in my ſenſes?—I know this is London—this houſe a tavern—I know I have a wife. Oh! 'were better to be mad than to remember her! She has a father—he is rich and proud—that I will not forget. But I will paſs his houſe, and ſend a malediction as I paſs it—[*furiouſly*]. No; breathe out my laſt ſigh at his inhoſpitable door, and that ſigh ſhall breathe—forgiveneſs.

[*Exit.*

SCENE II. *The Lodgings of Mr.* IRWIN.

Enter Mrs. PLACID, *followed by Lady* ELEANOR IRWIN.

Lady Eleanor. I am aſhamed of the trouble I have given you, Mrs. Placid. It had been ſufficient to have ſent me home in your carriage; to attend me yourſelf was ceremonious.

Mrs. Placid. My dear Lady Eleanor, I was reſolved to come home with you, as ſoon as Mr. Placid deſired I would not.

Lady Eleanor. Was that the cauſe of your politeneſs? I am ſorry it ſhould.

Mrs. Placid. Why ſorry? It is not proper he ſhould have his way in every thing.

Lady Eleanor. But I am afraid you ſeldom let him have it at all.

Mrs. Placid. Yes, I do.—But where, my dear, is Mr. Irwin?

Lady

Lady Eleanor, weeping. I cannot hear the name of Mr. Irwin without ſhedding tears: his health has been ſo much impaired of late, and his ſpirits ſo bad —ſometimes I even fear a failure in his mind.

[*Weeps again.*

Mrs. Placid. Is not he at home?

Lady Eleanor. I hope he is [*Goes to the ſide of the ſcenes*]. Tell your maſter, Mrs Placid is here.

Enter SERVANT.

Servant. My maſter is not come in yet, Madam.

Lady Eleanor. Not yet? I am very ſorry for it;—very ſorry indeed.

Mrs. Placid. Bleſs me, my dear, don't look thus pale. Come ſit down, and I'll ſtay with you till he returns.

[*Sits down herſelf.*

Lady Eleanor. My dear, you forget that Mr. Placid is in the carriage at the door all this time.

Mrs. Placid. No, I don't. Come, let us ſit and have half an hour's converſation.

Lady Eleanor. Nay, I inſiſt upon your going to him, or deſiring him to walk in.

Mrs. Placid. Now I think of it, they may as well drive him home, and come back for me.

Enter Mr. PLACID.

Why ſurely, Mr. Placid, you were very impatient! I think you might have waited a few minutes longer.

Placid. I would have waited, my dear, but the evening is ſo damp.

Lady Eleanor. Ah! 'tis the evening, which makes me alarmed for Mr. Irwin.

Placid. Lady Eleanor, you are one of the moſt tender, anxious, and affectionate wives I ever knew.

Mrs.

Mrs. Placid. There! Now he wiſhes he was your huſband—He admires the conduct of every wife but his own, and envies every married man of his acquaintance. But it is very ungenerous of you.

Placid. So it is, my dear; and not at all conſiſtent with the law of retaliation; for I am ſure there is not one of my acquaintance who envies me.

Mrs. Placid. Mr. Placid, your behaviour throughout this whole day has been ſo totally different to what it ever was before, that I am half reſolved to live no longer with you.

Placid, aſide. It will do—It will do.

Lady Eleanor. Oh, my dear friends, do not talk of parting: how can you, while every bleſſing ſmiles on your union? Even I, who have reaſon to regret mine, yet, while that load of grief, a ſeparation from Mr. Irwin, is but averted, I will think every other affliction ſupportable. [*A loud rapping at the door.*] That is he.

Mrs. Placid. Why, you ſeem in raptures at his return.

Lady Eleanor. I know no greater rapture.

Enter IRWIN *pale, trembling, and diſordered.*

Lady Eleanor. My dear, you are not well, I ſee.

Irwin. Yes.—[*Aſide to her in anger*—Why do you ſpeak of it?

Placid. How do you do, Irwin?

Irwin. I am glad to ſee you. [*Bows.*

Mrs. Placid. But I am ſorry to ſee you look ſo ill.

Irwin. I have only been taking a glaſs too much.

[*Lady* Eleanor *weeps.*

Placid. Pſhaw! Don't I know you never drink?

Irwin. You are miſtaken: I do when my wife is not by. I am afraid of her.

Placid. Impoſſible.

Irwin. What! To be afraid of one's wife?

Placid. No; I think that very poſſible.

Mrs. Placid. But it does not look well when it is ſo; it makes a man appear contemptible, and a woman a termagant. Come, Mr. Placid, I cannot ſtay another moment. Good night. Heaven bleſs you! *To Lady* Eleanor]—Good night, my dear Mr. Irwin; and now, pray take my advice and keep up your ſpirits.

Irwin. I will, Madam. [*Shaking hands with* Placid] And do you keep up your ſpirits.

[*Exeunt Mr. and Mrs.* Placid.

[Irwin *ſhuts the door with care after them, and looks round the room as if he feared to be ſeen or overheard.*]

I am glad they are gone. I ſpoke unkindly to you juſt now, did I not? My temper is altered lately; and yet I love you.

Lady Eleanor. I never doubted it, nor ever will.

Irwin. If you did, you would wrong me; for there is not a danger I would not riſk for your ſake; there is not an infamy I would not be branded with to make you happy, nor a puniſhment I would not undergo, with joy, for your welfare.—But there is a bar to this; we are unfortunately ſo entwined together, ſo linked, ſo rivetted, ſo cruelly, painfully fettered to each other, you could not be happy unleſs I ſhared the ſelf ſame happineſs with you.—But you will learn better—now you are in London, and amongſt faſhionable wives; you muſt learn better. [*Walks about and ſmiles, with a ghaſtly countenance.*]

Lady Eleanor. Do not talk, do not look thus wildly—Indeed, indeed, you make me very uneaſy.

Irwin. What! uneaſy when I come to bring you comfort; and ſuch comfort as you have not experienced for many a day? [*He pulls out a pocket-book.*] Here is a friend in our neceſſity,—a friend that brings a thouſand friends; plenty and—no, not always—peace. [*He takes ſeveral papers from the book, and puts them into her hands—She looks at them, then ſcreams.*]

Lady

Lady Eleanor. Ah! 'Tis money. [*Trembling.*] Theſe are Bank notes.

Irwin. Huſh! For heaven's ſake, huſh! We ſhall be diſcovered. [*Trembling and in great perturbation.*] What alarms you thus?

Lady Eleanor. What alarms you?

Irwin Do you ſay I am frightened?

Lady Eleanor. A ſight ſo new has frightened me.

Irwin. Nay, they are your own: by heaven, they are! No one on earth has a better, or a fairer right than you have. It was a laudable act by which I obtained them.—The parent-bird had forſook its young, and I but forced it back to perform the right of nature.

Lady Eleanor. You are inſane, I fear. No, no, I do not *fear*— *I hope* you are.

[*A loud rapping at the ſtreet-door—He ſtarts, takes the notes from her, and puts them haſtily into his pocket.*]

Irwin. Go to the door yourſelf; and if 'tis any one who aſks for me, ſay I am not come home yet.

[*She goes out, then returns.*

Lady Eleanor. It is the perſon belonging to the houſe: no one to us.

Irwin. My dear Eleanor, are you willing to quit London with me in about two hours time?

Lady Eleanor. Inſtantly.

Irwin. Nay, not only London, but England.

Lady Eleanor. This world, if you deſire it. To go in company with you, will make the journey pleaſant; and all I loved on earth would ſtill be with me.

Irwin. You can, then, leave your father without regret, *never*, *never* to ſee him more?

Lady Eleanor. Why ſhould I think on him, who will not think of me? [*Weeps.*

Irwin. But our children——

Lady Eleanor. We are not to leave them behind?

Irwin. One of them we muſt: but do not let that give you uneaſineſs. You know he has never lived

with us ſince his infancy, and cannot pine for the loſs of parents whom he has never known.

Lady Eleanor. But I have *known him.* He was my firſt; and, ſometimes, I think more cloſely wound around my heart, than all the reſt. The grief I felt on being forced to leave him when we went abroad, and the conſtant anxiety I have ſince experienced leſt he ſhould not be kindly treated, have augmented, I think, my tenderneſs.

Irwin. All my endeavours to day, as well as every other day, have been in vain to find into what part of the country his nurſe has taken him.—Nay, be not thus overcome with tears; we will (in ſpite of all my haſte to be gone) ſtay one more miſerable day here, in hopes to procure intelligence, ſo as to take him with us; and then ſmile with contempt on all we leave behind. [*Exeunt.*

END OF THE SECOND ACT.

ACT

ACT III.

SCENE I. *A Library at Lord* NORLAND'S.

Enter Lord NORLAND, *followed by Mr.* HARMONY.

Lord Norland, in anger. I tell you, Mr. Harmony, that if an indifferent perſon, one on whom I had never beſtowed a favour in my life, were to offend me, it is in my nature never to forgive. Can I then forgive my own daughter, my only child, on whom I heaped continually marks of the moſt affectionate fondneſs? Shall ſhe dare to offend me in the tendereſt point, and you dare to ſuppoſe I will pardon her?

Harmony. Your child, conſider.

Lord Norland. The weakeſt argument you can uſe. As my child, was not ſhe moſt bound to obey me? As my child, ought ſhe not to have ſacrificed her own happineſs to mine? Inſtead of which, mine has been yielded up for a whim, a fancy, a fancy to marry a beggar; and as ſuch is her choice, let her beg with him.

Harmony. She does by me;—pleads hard for your forgiveneſs.

Lord Norland. If I thought ſhe dared to ſend a meſſage to me, though dictated on her knees, ſhe ſhould find that ſhe had not yet felt the full force of my reſentment.

Harmony. What could you do more?

Lord Norland. I have done nothing yet. At preſent, I have only abandoned her;—but I can perſecute.

Harmony. I have no doubt of it: and, that I may not be the means of aggravating your diſpleaſure, I aſſure you, that what I have now ſaid has been entirely from myſelf, without any deſire of hers; and, at the ſame time, I give you my promiſe, I will never preſume to intrude he ſubject again.

Lord Norland. On this condition (and on no other) I forgive you now.

Harmony. And now then, my Lord, let us paſs from thoſe who have forfeited your love, to thoſe who poſſeſs it.—I heard ſome time ago, but I never preſumed to mention it to you, that you had adopted a young man as your ſon?

Lord Norland. "A young man!" Pſhaw!—No; a boy—a mere child, who fell in my way by accident.

Harmony. A chance child! Ho! ho!—I underſtand you.

Lord Norland. Do not jeſt with me, Sir, do I look——

Harmony. Yes, you look as if you would be aſhamed to own it, if you had one.

Lord Norland. But this boy I am not aſhamed of:—he is a favourite—rather a favourite.—I did not like him ſo well at firſt;—bur cuſtom,—and having a poor creature entirely at one's mercy, one begins to love it merely from the idea of———What would be its fate if one did not?

Harmony. Is he an orphan then?

Lord Norland. No.

Harmony. You have a friendſhip for his parents?

Lord Norland. I never ſaw the father: his mother I had a friendſhip for once. [*Sighing.*

Harmony. Ay, while the huſband was away.

Lord Norland. I tell you no. [*violently*]—But aſk no more queſtions. Who his parents are, is a ſecret, which neither he, nor any one (that is now living) knows, except myſelf; nor ever ſhall.

Harmony. Well, my Lord, ſince 'tis your pleaſure to conſider him as your child, I ſincerely wiſh you may experience more duty from him than you have done from your daughter.

Lord Norland. Thank Heaven, his diſpoſition is not like her's.—No: [*very much impaſſioned*] I have

have the joy to ſay, that never child was ſo unlike its mother.

Harmony, ſtarting. How! His mother!

Lord Norland. Confuſion!—what have I ſaid?—I am aſhamed——

Harmony. No,—be proud.

Lord Norland. Of what?

Harmony. That you have a lawful heir to all your riches; proud that you have a grandſon.

Lord Norland. I would have concealed it from all the world; I wiſhed it even unknown to myſelf. And let me tell you, Sir, (as not by deſign, but through my inadvertency, you are become acquainted with this ſecret) that, if ever you breathe it to a ſingle creature, the boy ſhall anſwer for it; for, were he known to be her's, though he were dearer to me than ever *ſhe* was, I would turn him from my houſe, and caſt him from my heart, as I have done her.

Harmony. I believe you;—and in compaſſion to the child, give you my *ſolemn promiſe* never to reveal who he is. I have heard that thoſe unfortunate parents left an infant behind when they went abroad, and that they lament him as loſt. Will you ſatisfy my curioſity, in what manner you ſought and found him out?

Lord Norland. Do you ſuppoſe I ſearched for him? No;—he was forced upon me. A woman followed me, about eight years ago, in the fields adjoining to my country ſeat, with a half ſtarved boy in her hand, and aſked my charity for my grandchild: the impreſſion of the word, made me turn round involuntarily; and caſting my eyes upon him, I was rejoiced, not to find a feature of his mother's in all his face; and I began to feel ſomething like pity for him. In ſhort, he caught ſuch faſt hold by one of my fingers, that I aſked him careleſsly "if he would go home and live with me?" On which, he anſwered me ſo willingly "Yes,' I took him at his word.

Harmony.

Harmony. And did never your regard for him, plead in his mother's behalf?

Lord Norland. Never. For, by Heaven, I would as ſoon forgive the robber who met me laſt night at my own door, and, holding a piſtol to my breaſt, took from me a ſum to a conſiderable amount, as I would pardon her.

Harmony. Did ſuch an accident happen to you?

Lord Norland. Have you not heard of it?

Harmony. No.

Lord Norland. It is amazing we cannot put a ſtop to ſuch depredations.

Harmony. Proviſions are ſo ſcarce!

Enter Servant.

Servant. Miſs Wooburn, my Lord, if you are not engaged, will come and ſit an hour with you.

Lord Norland. I have no company but what ſhe is perfectly acquainted with, and ſhall be glad of her viſit [*Exit Servant.*

Harmony. You forget I am a ſtranger, and my preſence may not be welcome.

Lord Norland. A ſtranger! What, to my ward? to Lady Ramble? for that is the name which cuſtom would authoriſe her to keep; but ſuch courteſy ſhe diſdains, in contempt of the unworthy giver of the title.

Harmony. I am intimate with Sir Robert, my Lord; and though I acknowledge that both you and his lady have cauſe for complaint, yet Sir Robert has ſtill many virtues.

Lord Norland. Not one. He is the moſt vile, the moſt deteſtable of characters. He not only contradicted my will in the whole of his conduct, but he ſeldom met me that he did not give me ſome perſonal affront.

Harmony. It is, however, generally held better to be uncivil in a perſon's preſence, than in his abſence.

Lord Norland. He was uncivil to me in every reſpect.

Harmony. That I will deny; for I have heard Sir

Sir Robert, in your abſence, ſay ſuch things in your praiſe!—

Lord Norland. Indeed!

Harmony. Moſt aſſuredly.

Lord Norland. I wiſh he had ſometimes done me the honour to have ſpoken politely to my face.

Harmony. That is not Sir Robert's way;—he is no flatterer. But then, no ſooner has your back been turned, than I have heard him laviſh in your praiſe.

Lord Norland. I muſt own, Mr. Harmony, that I never looked upon Sir Robert as incorrigible. I could always diſcern a ray of underſtanding, and a beam of virtue through all his foibles; nor would I have urged the divorce, but that I found his wife's ſenſibility could not bear his neglect; and even now, notwithſtanding her endeavour to conceal it, ſhe pines in ſecret, and laments her hard fortune. All my hopes of reſtoring her health reſt on one proſpect—that of finding a man worthy my recommendation for her ſecond huſband, and, by creating a ſecond paſſion, expel the firſt.—Mr. Harmony, you and I have been long acquainted—I have known your diſpoſition from your infancy—Now, if ſuch a man as you were to offer—

Harmony. You flatter me.

Lord Norland. I do not.—Would you venture to become her huſband?

Harmony. I cannot ſay I have any particular deſire; but if it will oblige either you or her,—for my part, I think the ſhort time we live in this world, we ſhould do all we can to oblige each other.

Lord Norland. I ſhould rejoice at ſuch an union myſelf, and I think I can anſwer for her.—You permit me then to make overtures to her in your name?

Harmony, conſidering. This is rather a ſerious piece of buſineſs———However, I never did make a difficulty when I wiſhed to oblige a friend.—But there

there is one proviſo, my Lord; I muſt firſt mention it to Sir Robert.

Lord Norland. Why ſo?

Harmony. Becauſe he and I have always been very intimate friends; and to marry his wife, without even telling him of it, will appear very uncivil.

Lord Norland. Do you mean then to aſk his conſent?

Harmony. Not abſolutely his conſent; but I will inſinuate the ſubject to him, and obtain his approbation in a manner ſuitable to my own ſatisfaction.

Lord Norland. You will oblige me then if you will ſee him as early as poſſible; for it is reported he is going abroad.

Harmony. I will go to him immediately;—and, my Lord, I will do all in my power to oblige you, Sir Robert and his Lady; [*aſide*—but as to obliging myſelf, that was never one of my conſiderations.

[*Exit.*

Enter Miſs WOOBURN.

Lord Norland. I am ſorry to ſee you thus; you have been weeping? Will you ſtill lament your ſeparation from a cruel huſband, as if you had followed a kind one to the grave?

Miſs Wooburn. By no means, my Lord. Tears from our ſex are not always the reſult of grief; they are frequently no more than little ſympathetic tributes which we pay to our fellow-beings, while the mind and the heart are ſteeled againſt the weakneſs which our eyes indicate.

Lord Norland. Can you ſay, your mind and heart are ſo ſteeled?

Miſs Wooburn. I can: My mind is as firmly fixed againſt Sir Robert Ramble, as at our firſt acquaintance it was fixed upon him. And I ſolemnly proteſt——

Lord Norland. To a man of my age and obſervation, proteſtations are vain.—Give me a proof that you have rooted him from your heart.

Miſs Wooburn. Any proof you require, I will give you without a moment's heſitation.

Lord

Lord Norland. I take you at your word; and desire you to accept a Gentleman, whom I shall recommend for your second husband. [*Miss* Wooburn *starts*]—You said you would not hesitate a moment.

Miss Wooburn. I thought I should not;—but this is something so unexpected——

Lord Norland You break your word then, and still give cause for this ungrateful man, to ridicule your fondness for him.

Miss Wooburn. No, I will put an end to that humiliation; and whoever the Gentleman is whom you mean to propose—Yet, do not name him at present—but give me the satisfaction of keeping the promise I have made to you (at least for a little time) without exactly knowing how far it extends; for, in return, I have a promise to ask from you, before I acquaint you with the nature of your engagement.

Lord Norland. I give my promise. Now name your request.

Miss Wooburn. Then, my Lord, [*hesitating and confused*]—the law gave me back, upon my divorce from Sir Robert, the very large fortune which I brought to him.—I am afraid, that in his present circumstances, to enforce the strict payment of this debt, would very much embarrass him.

Lord Norland. What if it did?

Miss Wooburn. It is my entreaty to you (in whose hands is invested the power to demand this right of law) to lay my claim aside for the present. [*Lord* Norland *offers to speak*] I know, my Lord, what you are going to say; I know Sir Robert is not *now*, but I can never forget that he *has been* my husband.

Lord Norland. To shew my gratitude for your compliance with the request I have just made you, [*Goes to a table in the library*] here is the bond by which I am impowered to seize on the greatest part of his estates in right of you: take the bond into your own possession till your next husband demands it of you; and by the time you have called him husband for a few weeks, this tenderness, or delicacy to Sir Robert, will be worn away.

Enter

Enter HARMONY, *haſtily.*

Harmony. My Lord, I eg pardon; but I forgot to mention———

Miſs Wooburn. Oh, Mr. Harmony, I have not ſeen you before I know not when: I am particularly happy at your calling juſt now, for I have—[*heſitating*] a little favour to aſk of you.

Harmony. If it were a great favour, Madam, you might command me.

Miſs Wooburn. But—my Lord, I beg your pardon—but the favour I have to aſk of Mr. Harmony muſt be told to him in private.

Lord Norland. Oh! I am ſure I have not the leaſt objection to you and Mr. Harmony having a private conference. I'll leave you together. [Harmony *appears embarraſſed.*] You do not derange my buſineſs—I'll be back in a ſhort time. [*Exit.*

Miſs Wooburn. Mr. Harmony, you are the very man on earth I moſt wanted to ſee. [Harmony *bows*] I know the kindneſs of your heart, the liberality of your ſentiments, and I wiſh to repoſe a charge to your truſt, very near to me indeed—but you muſt be ſecret.

Harmony. When a Lady repoſes a truſt in me, I ſhould not be a man if I were not.

Miſs Wooburn. I muſt firſt inform you, that Lord Norland has juſt drawn from me a promiſe, that I will once more enter into the marriage-ſtate; and without knowing to whom he intends to give me, I will keep my promiſe—But it is in vain to ſay, that, though I mean all duty and fidelity to my ſecond huſband, I ſhall not experience moments when my thoughts—will wander on my firſt.

Harmony, ſtarting. Hem!—Hem!—[*To her*—Indeed?

Miſs Wooburn. I muſt always rejoice in Sir Robert's ſucceſſes, and lament over his misfortunes.

Harmony. If that is all—

Miſs

Miſs Wooburn. No, I would go one ſtep further: [Harmony *ſtarts again*] I would ſecure him from thoſe misfortunes, which to hear of, will diſturb my peace of mind. I know his fortune has ſuffered very much, and I cannot, *will not*, place it in the power of the man, whom my Lord Norland may point out for my next marriage, to diſtreſs him farther.—This is the writing, by which that Gentleman may claim the part of my fortune from Sir Robert Ramble, which is in landed property; carry it, my dear Mr. Harmony, to Sir Robert inſtantly; and tell him, that in ſeparating from him, I meant only to give him liberty; not make him the debtor, perhaps the priſoner of my future huſband.

Harmony. Madam, I will moſt undoubtedly take this bond to my friend; but will you give me leave to ſuggeſt to you, that the perſon on whom you beſtow your hand, may be a little ſurpriſed to find, that while he is in poſſeſſion of you, Sir Robert is in the poſſeſſion of your fortune?

Miſs Wooburn. Do not imagine, Sir, that I ſhall marry any man, without firſt declaring what I have done—I only wiſh at preſent it ſhould be concealed from Lord Norland—When this paper is given, as I have required, it cannot be recalled; and when that is paſt, I ſhall divulge my conduct to whom I pleaſe; and firſt of all, to him, who ſhall offer me his addreſſes.

Harmony. And if he is a man of my feelings, his addreſſes will be doubly importunate for this proof of liberality to your former huſband.—But are you ſure, that in the return of this bond, there is no ſecret affection, no latent ſpark of love?

Miſs Wooburn. None. I know my heart; and if there was, I could not aſk you, Mr. Harmony (nor any one like you), to be the meſſenger of an imprudent paſſion. Sir Robert's vanity, I know, may cauſe him to judge otherwiſe; but undeceive him; let him know this is a ſacrifice to the golden principles of duty, and not an offering to the tinſelled ſhrine of love.

Enter Lord NORLAND.

Put up the bond.———[Harmony *conceals it*]

Lord Norland. Well, my dear, have you made your requeſt?

Miſs Wooburn. Yes, my Lord.

Lord Norland. And has he granted it?

Harmony. Yes, my Lord. I am going to grant it.

Lord Norland. I ſincerely wiſh you both joy of this good underſtanding between you. But, Mr. Harmony, [*in a whiſper*] are not you going to Sir Robert?

Harmony. Yes, my Lord, I am going this moment.

Lord Norland. Make haſte then, and do not forget your errand.

Harmony. No, my Lord, I ſha'n't forget my errand; it won't ſlip my memory—Good morning, my Lord—good morning, Madam. [*Exit.*

Lord Norland. Now, my dear, as you and Mr. Harmony ſeem to be on ſuch excellent terms, I think I may venture to tell you (if he has not yet told you himſelf), that he is the man, who is to be your huſband.

Miſs Wooburn. He! Mr. Harmony!—No, my Lord, he has not told me; and I am confident he never will.

Lord Norland. What makes you think ſo?

Miſs Wooburn. Becauſe—becauſe—he muſt be ſenſible he would not be the man I ſhould chooſe.

Lord Norland. And where is the woman who marries the man ſhe would chooſe? You are reverſing the order of ſociety; men, only, have the right of choice in marriage. Were women permitted theirs, we ſhould have handſome beggars allied to our nobleſt families, and no ſuch object in our whole iſland as an old maid.

Miſs Wooburn. But being denied that choice, why orbid to remain as I am?

Lord

Lord Norland. What are you now? Neither a widow, a maid, nor a wife. If I could fix a term to your preſent ſtate, I ſhould not be thus anxious to place you in another.

Miſs Wooburn. I am perfectly acquainted with your friendly motives, and feel the full force of your advice.—I therefore renew my promiſe—and although Mr. Harmony (in reſpect to the marriage ſtate) is as little to my wiſhes as any man on earth, I will nevertheleſs endeavour—whatever ſtruggles it may coſt me—to be to him, if he prefers his ſuit, a dutiful, an obedient—but, for a loving wife, that I can never be again.

[*Exeunt ſeverally.*

SCENE, *An Apartment at Sir* ROBERT RAMBLE'S.

Enter Sir ROBERT *and Mr.* HARMONY.

Sir Robert. I thank you for this viſit. I was undetermined what to do with myſelf. Your company has determined me to ſtay at home.

Harmony. I was with a Gentleman juſt now, Sir Robert, and you were the ſubject of our converſation.

Sir Robert. Had it been a Lady, I ſhould be anxious to know what ſhe ſaid.

Harmony. I have been with a Lady likewiſe; and ſhe made you the ſubject of her diſcourſe.

Sir Robert But was ſhe handſome?

Harmony. Very handſome.

Sir Robert. My dear fellow, what is her name? What did ſhe ſay, and where may I meet with her.

Harmony. Her name is Wooburn.

Sir Robert. That is the name of my late wife.

Harmony. It is her I mean.

Sir Robert. Zounds, you had juſt put my ſpirits into a flame, and now you throw cold water all over me.

Harmony. I am ſorry to hear you ſay ſo, for I come from her this moment; and what do you think is the preſent ſhe has given me to deliver to you?

Sir Robert. Pſhaw! I want no preſents. Some of my old love-letters returned, I ſuppoſe, to remind me of my inconſtancy?

Harmony. Do not undervalue her generoſity: this is her preſent;—this bond, which has power to take from you three thouſand a year, her right.

Sir Robert. Ah! this is a preſent indeed. Are you ſure you ſpeak truth? Let me look at it:—Sure my eyes deceive me!—No, by Heaven it is true! [*Reads*] The very thing I wanted, and will make me perfectly happy. Now I'll be generous again; my bills ſhall be paid, my gaming debts cancelled, poor Irwin ſhall find a friend; and I'll ſend her as pretty a copy of verſes as ever I wrote in my life.

Harmony. Take care how you treat with levity a woman of her elevated mind. She charged me to aſſure you, "that love had no ſhare whatever in this act, but merely compaſſion to the embarraſſed ſtate of your affairs."

Sir Robert. Sir, I would have you to know, I am no object of compaſſion. However, a Lady's favour one cannot return; and ſo, I'll keep this thing.

[*Puts it in his pocket.*

Harmony. Nay, if your circumſtances are different from what ſhe imagines, give it me back, and I will return it to her.

Sir Robert. No, poor thing! it would break her heart to ſend it back—No, I'll keep it—She would never forgive me, were I to ſend it back. I'll keep it. And ſhe is welcome to attribute her concern for me to what ſhe pleaſes. But ſurely you can ſee—you can underſtand—But Heaven bleſs her for her love! and I would love her in return—if I could.

Harmony. You would not walk thus, if you had ſeen the firm dignity with which ſhe gave me that paper

paper—" Aſſure him," ſaid ſhe, " no remaining affection comes along with it, but merely a duty which I owe him, to protect him from the humiliation of being a debtor to the man whom I am going to marry."

Sir Robert, [*With the utmoſt emotion.*] Why, ſhe is not going to be married again!

Harmony. I believe ſo.

Sir Robert. But are you ſure of it, Sir? Are you ſure of it?

Harmony. Both ſhe and her guardian told me ſo.

Sir Robert. That guardian, my Lord Norland, is one of the baſeſt, vileſt of men.—I tell you what, Sir, I'll reſent this uſage.

Harmony. Wherefore?—As to his being the means of bringing about your ſeparation, in that he obliged you.

Sir Robert. Yes, Sir, he did, he certainly did;—but though I am not the leaſt offended with him on that head (for at that I rejoice), yet I will reſent his diſpoſing of her a ſecond time.

Harmony. And why?

Sir Robert. Becauſe, little regard as I have for her myſelf, yet no other man ſhall dare to treat her ſo ill, as I have done.

Harmony. Do not fear it—Her next huſband will be a man, who, I can ſafely ſay, will never inſult, or even offend her; but ſooth, indulge, and make her happy.

Sir Robert. And do you dare to tell me, that her next huſband ſhall make her happy? Now, that is worſe than the other—No, Sir, no man ſhall ever have it to ſay " he has made her either happy or miſerable," but myſelf.

Harmony. I know of but one way to prevent it.

Sir Robert. And what is that?

Harmony. Pay your addreſſes to her, and marry her again yourſelf.

Sir Robert. And I would, rather than ſhe ſhould be happy with any body elſe. The devil take me if I would not.

Harmony. To ſhew that I am wholly diſintereſted in this affair, I will carry her a letter from you if you like, and ſay all I can in your behalf.

Sir Robert. Ha, ha, ha! Now, my dear Harmony, you carry your good-natured ſimplicity too far. However, I thank you, I ſincerely thank you—But do you imagine I ſhould be ſuch a blockhead, as to make love to the ſame woman I made love to ſeven years ago, and who for the laſt ſix years I totally neglected?

Harmony. Yes: for if you neglected her ſix years, ſhe will now be a novelty.

Sir Robert. Egad, and ſo ſhe will. You are right.

Harmony. But being in poſſeſſion of her fortune, you can be very happy without her.

Sir Robert. Take her fortune back, Sir. [*Taking the bond from his pocket and offering it to* Harmony] I would ſtarve, I would periſh, die in poverty and infamy, rather than owe an obligation to a vile, perfidious, inconſtant woman.

Harmony. Conſider, Sir Robert, if you inſiſt on my taking this bond back, it may fall into the huſband's hands.

Sir Robert. Take it back—I inſiſt upon it. [*Gives it to him, and* Harmony *puts it up*] But, Mr. Harmony, depend on it, Lord Norland ſhall hear from me, in the moſt ſerious manner, for his interference—I repeat, he is the vileſt, the moſt villanous of men.

Harmony. How can you ſpeak with ſuch rancour of a nobleman, who ſpeaks of *you* in the higheſt terms?

Sir Robert. Does he, 'faith?

Harmony. He owns you have ſome faults.

Sir Robert. I know I have.

Harmony. But he thinks your good qualities are numberleſs.

Sir Robert. Now dam'me, if ever I thought ſo ill of *him*, as I have appeared to do!—But who is the intended

intended huſband, my dear friend? Tell me, that I may laugh at him, and make you laugh at him.

Harmony. No, I am not inclined to laugh at him.

Sir Robert. Is it old Solus?

Harmony. No.

Sir Robert. But I will bet you a wager it is ſomebody equally ridiculous.

Harmony. I never bet.

Sir Robert. Solus is mad for a wife, and has been praiſing mine up to the heavens; you need ſay no more; I know it is he.

Harmony. Upon my honour, it is not. However, I cannot diſcloſe to you at preſent the perſon's name; I muſt firſt obtain Lord Norland's permiſſion.

Sir Robert. I ſhall aſk you no more. I'll write to her—ſhe will tell me;—or, I'll pay her a viſit, and aſk her boldly myſelf.——Do you think [*anxiouſly*]—do you think ſhe would ſee me?

Harmony. You can but try.

Enter SERVANT.

Servant. Mr. Solus.

Sir Robert. Now I will find out the ſecret immediately.—I'll charge him with being the intended huſband.

Harmony. I will not ſtay to hear you.

Enter SOLUS.

Mr. Solus, how do you do? I am extremely ſorry that my engagements take me away as ſoon as you enter. [*Exit* Harmony *running, to avoid an explanation.*

Solus. Sir Robert, what is the matter? Has any thing ruffled you? Why, I never ſaw you look more out of temper, even while you were married.

Sir

Sir Robert. Ah! that I had never married! never known what marriage was! for, even at this moment, I feel its torments in my heart.

Solus. I have often heard of the torments of matrimony; but I conceive, that at the worſt, they are nothing more than a kind of violent tickling, which will force the tears into your eyes, though at the ſame time you are burſting your ſides with laughter.

Sir Robert. You have defined marriage too favourably; there is no laughter in the ſtate: all is melancholy, all gloom.

Solus. Now I think marriage is an excellent remedy for the ſpleen. I have known a Gentleman at a feaſt receive an affront, diſguiſe his rage, ſlep home, vent it all upon his wife, return to his companions, and be as good company as if nothing had happened.

Sir Robert. But even the neceſſary expences of a wife ſhould alarm you.

Solus. I can then retrench ſome of my own. Oh! my dear Sir, a married man has ſo many delightful privileges to what a bachelor has!—An old Lady will introduce her daughters to you in a diſhabille—"It does not ſignify, my dears, it's a married man"—One Lady will ſuffer you to draw on her glove—"Never mind, it's a married man"—Another will permit you to pull on her ſlipper; a third will even take you into her bed-chamber—"Pſhaw, it's *nothing* but a married man."

Sir Robert. But the weight of your fetters will overbalance all theſe joys.

Solus. And I cannot ſay, notwithſtanding you are relieved from the bond, that I ſee much joy or brightneſs here.

Sir Robert. I am not very well at preſent; I have the headach; and, if ever a wife can be of comfort to her huſband, it muſt be when he is indiſpoſed. A wife, then, binds up your head, mixes your powders, bathes your temples, and hovers about, in a way that is moſt endearing.

Solus.

Solus. Don't ſpeak of it; I long to have one hover about me. But I will—I am determined I will, before I am a week older. Don't ſpeak, don't attempt to perſuade me not. Your deſcription has renewed my eagerneſs—*I* will be married.

Sir Robert. And without pretending not to know who you mean to make your wife, I tell you plainly, it is Miſs Wooburn, it is my late wife.—I know you have made overtures to my Lord Norland, and that he has given his conſent.

Solus. You tell me a great piece of news—I'll go aſk my Lord if it be true; and if he ſays it is, I ſhall be very glad to find it ſo.

Sir Robert. That is right, Sir; marry her, marry her;—I give you joy,—that's all.—Ha, ha, ha! I think I ſhould know her temper.—But if you will venture to marry her, I ſincerely wiſh you happy.

Solus. And if we are not, you know we can be divorced.

Sir Robert. Not always. Take my advice, and live as you are.

Solus. You almoſt ſtagger my reſolution.—I had painted ſuch bright proſpects in marriage:—Good day to you. [*Going, returns*]—You think I had better not marry?

Sir Robert. You are undone if you do.

Solus, [*ſighing.*] *You* ought to know from experience.

Sir Robert. From that I ſpeak.

Solus. [*Going to the door, and returning once or twice, as unſtable in his reſolution.*]

But then, what a poor diſconſolate object ſhall I live, without a wife to hover about me; to bind up my head, and bathe my temples! Oh! I am impatient for all the chattered rights, privileges, and immunities of a married man.

[*Exit*

Sir

Sir Robert. Furies, racks, torments!—I cannot bear what I feel, and yet I am aſhamed to own I feel any thing!

Enter Mr. PLACID.

Placid. My dear Sir Robert, give me joy. Mrs. Placid and I are come to the very point you adviſed: matters are in the faireſt way for a ſeparation.

Sir Robert. I do give you joy, and moſt ſincerely.—You are right; you'll ſoon be as happy as I am. *Sighing*] But would you ſuppoſe it? that deluded woman, my wife, is going to be married again! I thought ſhe had had enough of me!

Placid. You are hurt, I ſee, leſt the world ſhould ſay ſhe has forgot you.

Sir Robert. She cannot forget me; I defy her to forget me.

Placid. Who is her intended huſband?

Sir Robert. Solus, Solus. An old man—an ugly man. He left me this moment and owned it—owned it! Go after him, will you, and perſuade him not to have her.

Placid. My advice will have no effect, for you know he is bent upon matrimony.

Sir Robert. Then could not you, my dear Sir (as you are going to be ſeparated), could not you recommend him to marry your wife?—It will be all the ſame to you, I dare ſay, and I ſhall like it much better.

Placid. Ours will not be a divorce, conſider, but merely a ſeparate maintenance. But were it otherwiſe, I wiſh no man ſo ill, as to wiſh him married to Mrs. Placid.

Sir Robert. That is my caſe exactly. I wiſh no man ſo ill, as to wiſh him married to my Lady Rambl

ble; and poor old Solus in particular, poor old man! a very good ſort of man—I have a great friendſhip for Solus—I can't ſtay a moment in the houſe—I muſt go ſomewhere—I'll go to Solus.—No, I'll go to Lord Norland—No, I will go to Harmony; and then I'll call on you, and we'll take a bottle together; and when we are both free [*takes his hand*] we'll join, from that moment we'll join, to laugh at, to contemn, to deſpiſe all thoſe who boaſt of the joys of conjugal love. [*Exeunt.*

END OF THE THIRD ACT.

ACT

ACT IV.

SCENE I. *An Apartment at Mr.* HARMONY'S.

Enter Mr. HARMONY.

Harmony. And now, for one of the moſt painful taſks that brotherly love ever draws upon me; to tell another, the ſuit, of which I gave him hope, has failed.—Yet, if I can but overcome Captain Irwin's delicacy ſo far, as to prevail on him to accept one proof more of my good wiſhes towards him;—but to a man of his nice ſenſe of obligations, the offer muſt be made with caution.

Enter Lord NORLAND.

Lord Norland. Mr. Harmony, I beg your pardon: I come in thus abruptly, from the anxiety I feel concerning what paſſed between us this morning in reſpect to Miſs Wooburn. You have not changed your mind, I hope?

Harmony. Indeed, my Lord, I am very ſorry that it will not be in my power to oblige you.

Lord Norland, [*in anger.*] How, Sir? Did not you give me your word?

Harmony. Only conditionally, my Lord.

Lord Norland. And what were the conditions?

Harmony.

Harmony. Have you ſorgot them? Her former huſband.

Enter SERVANT.

Servant. Sir Robert Ramble is in his carriage at the door, and, if you are at leiſure, will come in.

Harmony. Deſire him to walk up. I have your leave, I ſuppoſe, my Lord?

[*Exit Servant.*

Lord Norland. Yes; but let me get out of the houſe without meeting him. [*Going to the oppoſite door*] Can I go this way?

Harmony. Why ſhould you ſhun him?

Lord Norland. Becauſe he uſed his wife ill.

Harmony. He did. But I believe he is very ſorry for it.—And as for you, he ſaid to me only a few hours ago—but no matter.

Lord Norland. What did he ſay? I inſiſt upon knowing.

Harmony. Why then he ſaid, "that if he had a ſacred truſt to repoſe in any one, *you* ſhould be the man on earth, to whom he would confide it."

Lord Norland. Well, I am in no hurry; I can ſtay a few minutes.

Enter Sir ROBERT RAMBLE.

Sir Robert. Oh! Harmony! I am in ſuch a diſtracted ſtate of mind—-[*Seeing Lord* Norland, *he ſtarts, and bows with the moſt humble reſpect.*]

Lord Norland. Sir Robert, how do you do?

Sir Robert. My Lord, I am pretty well.—I hope I have the happineſs of ſeeing your Lordſhip in perfect health.

Lord Norland. Very well, Sir, I thank you.

Sir Robert. Indeed, my Lord, I think I never ſaw you look better.

Lord Norland. Mr. Harmony, you and Sir Robert may have ſome buſineſs—I'll wiſh you a good morning.

Harmony. No, my Lord, I fancy Sir Robert has nothing particular.

Sir Robert. Nothing, nothing, I aſſure you, my Lord.

Lord Norland. However, I have buſineſs myſelf in another place, and ſo you will excuſe me.

[*Going.*

Sir Robert, following him. My Lord—Lord Norland,—I truſt you will excuſe my enquiries.—I hope, my Lord, all your family are well?

Lord Norland. All very well.

Sir Robert. Your little Elevè,—Maſter Edward,—the young Gentleman you have adopted—I hope he is well—[*heſitating and confuſed*] And—your Ward, Sir—Miſs Wooburn—I hope, my Lord, ſhe is well?

Lord Norland. Yes, Sir Robert, Miſs Wooburn is tolerably well.

Sir Robert. Only tolerably, my Lord? I am ſorry for that.

Harmony. I hope, my Lord, you will excuſe my mentioning the ſubject; but I was telling Sir Robert juſt now, of your intentions reſpecting a ſecond marriage for that Lady; but Sir Robert does not appear to approve of the deſign.

Lord Norland. What objection can *he* have?

Sir Robert. My Lord, there are ſuch a number of bad huſbands; there are ſuch a number of diſſipated, unthinking, unprincipled men!—And—I ſhould be extremely ſorry to ſee any Lady with whom I have had the honour of being ſo cloſely allied, united to one who would undervalue her worth.

Lord Norland. Pray, Sir Robert, were you not then extremely ſorry for her, while ſhe was united to you?

Sir

Sir Robert. Very ſorry for her indeed, my Lord. But, at that time, my mind was ſo taken up with other cares, I own I did not feel the compaſſion which was her due; but, now that I am ſingle, I ſhall have leiſure to pay her more attention; and ſhould I find her unhappy, it muſt, inevitably, make me ſo.

Lord Norland. Depend upon it, that on the preſent occaſion, I ſhall take infinite care in the choice of her huſband.

Sir Robert. If your Lordſhip would permit me to have an interview with Miſs Wooburn, I think I ſhould be able at leaſt—

Lord Norland. You would not ſure inſult her by your preſence?

Sir Robert. I think I ſhould be able at leaſt to point out an object worthy of her taſte—I know what ſhe will like better than any body in the world.

Lord Norland Her requeſt has been, that I may point her out a huſband the reverſe of you.

Sir Robert. Then, upon my honour, my Lord, ſhe won't like him.

Lord Norland. Have not you liked women the reverſe of her?

Sir Robert. Yes, my Lord, perhaps I have, and perhaps I ſtill do. I do not pretend to love *her*; I did not ſay I did; nay, I poſitively proteſt I do not; but this indifference I acknowledge as one of my faults; and, notwithſtanding all my faults, give me leave to acknowledge my gratitude that your Lordſhip has nevertheleſs been pleaſed to declare you think my virtues are numberleſs. [*Lord* Norland *ſhews ſurpriſe.*]

Harmony, aſide to Sir Robert. Huſh, huſh!—Don't talk of your virtues now.

Lord Norland. Sir Robert, to all this incoherent language, this is my anſwer, this is my will: The Lady, to whom I have had the honour to be guardian, ſhall never (while ſhe calls me friend) ſee you more.

[*Sir* Robert, *at this ſentence, ſtands ſilent for ſome time, then, ſuddenly recollecting himſelf*]

Sir Robert. Lord Norland, I am too well acquainted with the truth of your word, and the firmneſs of your temper, to preſs my ſuit one ſentence farther.

Lord Norland. I commend your diſcernment.

Sir Robert. My Lord, I feel myſelf a little embarraſſed —I am afraid I have made myſelf a little ridiculous upon this occaſion—Will your Lordſhip do me the favour to forget it?

Lord Norland. I will forget whatever you pleaſe.

Harmony following him, whiſpers. I am ſorry to ſee you going away in deſpair.

Sir Robert. I never did deſpair in my life, Sir; and while a woman is the object of my wiſhes, I never will.

[*Exit.*

Lord Norland. What did he ſay?

Harmony. That he thought your conduct that of a juſt and an upright man.

Lord Norland. To ſay the truth, he has gone away with better manners than I could have imagined, conſidering his jealouſy is provoked.

Harmony. Ah! I always knew he loved his wife, notwithſtanding his behaviour to her; for, if you remember, he always ſpoke well of her behind her back.

Lord Norland. No, I do not remember it.

Harmony. Yes, he did; and that is the only criterion of a man's love, or of his friendſhip.

Enter SERVANT.

Servant. A young gentleman is at the door, Sir, enquiring for Lord Norland.

Lord Norland. Who can it be?

Harmony Your young gentleman from home, I dare ſay. Deſire him to walk in. Bring him here.

[*Exit Servant.*

Lord

Lord Norland. What buſineſs can he have to follow me?

Enter EDWARD.

Edward. Oh, my Lord, I beg your pardon for coming hither; but I come to tell you ſomething you will be glad to hear.

Harmony. Good Heaven! how like his mother!

Lord Norland, [*Taking him by the hand.*] I begin to think he is—but he was not ſo when I firſt took him. No, no, if he had, he would not have been thus near me now;—but to turn him away becauſe his countenance is a little changed, I think would not be right.

Edward, to Harmony. Pray, Sir, did you know my mother?

Harmony. I have ſeen her.

Edward. Did *you* ever ſee her, my Lord?

Lord Norland. I thought you had orders never to enquire about your parents? Have you forgot thoſe orders?

Edward. No, my Lord; but when this gentleman ſaid I was like my mother—it put me in mind of her.

Harmony. You do not remember your mother, do you?

Edward. Sometimes I think I do. I think ſometimes I remember her kiſſing me, when ſhe and my father went on board of a ſhip; and ſo hard ſhe preſſed me—I think I feel it now.

Harmony. Perhaps ſhe was the only Lady that ever ſaluted you?

Edward. No, Sir; not by many.

Lord Norland. But pray, young man (to have done with this ſubject), what brought you here? You ſeem to have forgot your errand?

Edward. And ſo I had, upon my word. Speaking of my mother, put it quite out of my head. —But, my Lord, I came to let you know, the robber who ſtopped you laſt night is taken.

Lord Norland. I am glad to hear it.

Edward. I knew you would; and therefore I begged to be the firſt to tell you.

Harmony, to Lord Norland. Should you know the perſon again?

Lord Norland. I cannot ſay I ſhould, his face ſeemed ſo much diſtorted.

Harmony. Ay, wretched man! I ſuppoſe with terror.

Lord Norland. No; it appeared a different paſſion from fear.

Edward. Perhaps, my Lord, it was *your* fear that made you think ſo.

Lord Norland. No, Sir, I was not frightened.

Edward. Then why did you give him your money?

Lord Norland. It was ſurpriſe cauſed me to do that.

Edward. I wondered what it was! You ſaid it was not fear, and I was ſure it could not be love.

Harmony. How has he been taken?

Edward. A perſon came to our ſteward, and informed againſt him;—and, Oh! my Lord, his poor wife told the officers who took him, they had met with misfortunes, which ſhe feared had cauſed a fever in her huſband's head; and, indeed, they found him too ill to be removed; and ſo, ſhe hoped, ſhe ſaid, "that as a man, not in his perfect mind, you would be merciful to him."

Lord Norland. I will be juſt.

Edward. And that is being merciful, is it not, my Lord?

Lord Norland. Not always.

Edward. I thought it had been.—It is not *juſt* to be unmerciful, is it?

Lord Norland. Certainly not.

Edward. Then it muſt be *juſt*, to have mercy.

Lord

Lord Norland. You draw a falſe concluſion. Great as is the virtue of *mercy*, *juſtice* is greater ſtill. *Juſtice* holds its place among thoſe cardinal virtues which include all the leſſer.—Come, Mr. Harmony, will you go home with me? And before I attend to this buſineſs, let me perſuade you to forget there is ſuch a perſon in the world as Sir Robert, and ſuffer me to introduce you to Miſs Wooburn, as the man who—

Harmony. I beg to be excuſed—Beſides the conſideration of Sir Robert, I have another reaſon why I cannot go with you. The melancholy tale which this young gentleman has been telling, has caſt a gloom on my ſpirits which renders me unfit for the ſociety of a Lady.

Lord Norland. Now I ſhould not be ſurpriſed were you to go in ſearch of this culprit and his family, and come to me to intreat me to forego the proſecution; but, before you aſk me, I tell you it is in vain—I will not.

Harmony. Lord Norland, I have lately been ſo unſucceſsful in my petitions to you, I ſhall never preſume to interpoſe between your rigour and a weak ſufferer more.

Lord Norland. Plead the cauſe of the good, and I will liſten; but you find none but the wicked for your compaſſion.

Harmony. The good in all ſtates, even in the very jaws of death, are objects of envy; it is the bad who are the only real ſufferers: There, where no internal conſolation cheers, who can refuſe a little external comfort?—And let me tell you, my Lord, that amidſt all your authority, your ſtate, your grandeur, I often pity you. [*Speaking with unaffected compaſſion.*

Lord Norland. Good-day, Mr. Harmony; and when you have apologiſed for what you have ſaid, we may be friends again.

[*Exit, leading off Edward.*

Harmony.

Harmony. Nay, hear my apology now. I cannot —no, it is not in my nature to live in reſentment, nor under the reſentment of any creature in the world.

[*Exit, following Lord* Norland.

SCENE II. *An Apartment at Lord* NORLAND'S.

Enter Sir ROBERT RAMBLE, *followed by a Servant.*

Sir Robert. Do not ſay who it is—but ſay a Gentleman who has ſome very particular buſineſs with her.

Servant. Yes, Sir. [*Going*]

Sir Robert. Pray, [*Servant returns.*] You are but lately come into this ſervice, I believe?

Servant. Only a few days, Sir.

Sir Robert. You don't know me, then?

Servant. No, Sir.

Sir Robert. I am very glad of it. So much the better. Go to Miſs Wooburn, with a Stranger's compliments who is waiting, and who begs to ſpeak with her upon an affair of importance.

Servant. Yes, Sir.

Exit.

Sir Robert. I wiſh I may die if I don't feel very unaccountably! How different are our ſenſations towards our wives, and all other women! This is the very firſt time ſhe has given me a palpitation ſince the honey-moon.

Enter Miſs WOOBURN, *who ſtarts on ſeeing Sir* Robert;—*he bows in great confuſion.*

Miſs Wooburn. Support me, Heaven!

[*Aſide.*]

Sir

Sir Robert. [*Bows repeatedly, and does not ſpeak till after many efforts.*]

Was ever man in ſuch confuſion before his wife! [*Aſide.*]

Miſs Wooburn. Sir Robert, having recovered in ſome meaſure, from the ſurpriſe into which this intruſion firſt threw me, I have only to ſay, that whatever pretence may have induced you to offer me this inſult, there are none to oblige me to bear with it.

[*Going.*

Sir Robert. Lady Ramb—[*recalling himſelf*] Miſs Woo—[*She turns*] Lady Ramble—[*recalling himſelf again*] Miſs Wooburn—Madam—You wrong me—There was a time when I inſulted you, I confeſs; but it is impoſſible that time ſhould ever return.

Miſs Wooburn. While I ſtay with you, I incur the danger.

[*Going.*

Sir Robert. [*holding her.*] Nay, liſten to me as a friend, whom you have ſo often heard as an enemy.—You offered me a favour by the hands of Mr. Harmony——

Miſs Wooburn And is this the motive of your viſit—this the return——

Sir Robert. No, Madam, that obligation was not the motive which drew me hither—The real cauſe of this ſeeming intruſion is—you are going to be married once more, and I come to warn you of your danger.

Miſs Wooburn. That you did ſufficiently in the marriage-ſtate.

Sir Robert. But now I come to offer you advice that may be of the moſt material conſequence, ſhould you really be determined to yield yourſelf again into the power of a huſband.

Miſs Wooburn. Which I moſt aſſuredly am.

Sir Robert. Happy, happy man! How much is he the object of my envy! None ſo well as I, know how to envy him, becauſe none ſo well as I, know how

to

to value you. [*She offers to go*] Nay, by Heaven you ſhall not go till you have heard all that I came to ſay!

Miſs Wooburn. Speak it then inſtantly.

Sir Robert. No, it would take whole ages to ſpeak; and ſhould we live together, as long as we *have* lived together, ſtill I ſhould not find time to tell you—how much I love you.

[*A loud rapping at the ſtreet-door.*

Miſs Wooburn. That, I hope, is Lord Norland.

Sir Robert. And what has Lord Norland to do with ſouls free as ours? Let us go to Scotland again; and again bid defiance to his ſtern commands.

Miſs Wooburn. Be aſſured, that through him only, will I ever liſten to a ſyllable you have to utter.

Sir Robert. One ſyllable only, and I am gone that inſtant.

Miſs Wooburn. Well Sir?

[*He heſitates, trembles, ſeems to ſtruggle with himſelf; then approaching her ſlowly, timidly, and as if aſhamed of his humiliation, kneels to her—She turns away*]

Sir Robert, [*kneeling*] Maria, Maria, look at me!—Look at me in this humble ſtate—Could you have ſuſpected this, Maria?

Miſs Wooburn. No: nor can I conceive what this mockery means.

Sir Robert. It means, that now you are no longer my wife, you are my Goddeſs; and thus I offer you my ſupplication, that (if you are reſolved not to live ſingle) amongſt the numerous train who preſent their ſuit, you will once more ſelect me.

Miſs Wooburn. You!—You who have treated me with cruelty; who made no ſecret of your love for others—but gloried, boaſted of your gallantries?

Sir Robert. I did, I did—But here I ſwear, only truſt me again—do but once more truſt me, and I ſwear,

ſwear by all I hold moſt ſacred, that I will for the future carefully conceal all my gallantries from your knowledge—though they were ten times more frequent than before.

Enter EDWARD.

Edward. Oh, my dear Miſs Wooburn—What! Sir Robert here too! [*Goes to Sir* Robert *and ſhakes hands*] How do you do, Sir Robert? Who would have thought of ſeeing you here? I am glad to ſee you though, with all my heart; and ſo I dare ſay is Miſs Wooburn, though ſhe may not like to ſay ſo.

Miſs Wooburn. You are impertinent, Sir.

Edward. What, for coming in? I will go away then.

Sir Robert, Do, do—There's a good boy—do.

Edward, going, returns. I cannot help laughing, though, to ſee you two together!—For you know you never were together when you lived in the ſame houſe.

Sir Robert Leave the room inſtantly, Sir, or I ſhall call Lord Norland.

Edward. Oh, don't take that trouble, I will call him myſelf. [*Runs to the door*]—My Lord, my Lord, pray come here this moment—As I am alive, here is Sir Robert Ramble along with Lady Ramble!

Enter Lord NORLAND.

Sir Robert *looks confounded, Lord* Norland *points to* Edward *to leave the room.*

Exit Edward.

Lord

Lord Norland. Sir Robert, on what pretence do you come hither?

Sir Robert. On the ſame pretence, as when I was for the firſt time admitted into your houſe; to ſolicit this Lady's hand. And, after having had it once, no force ſhall compel me to take a refuſal.

Lord Norland. I will try however—Madam, quit the room inſtantly.

Sir Robert. My Lord, ſhe ſhall not quit it.

Lord Norland. I command her to go.

Sir Robert. And I command her to ſtay.

Lord Norland. Which of us will you obey?

Miſs Wooburn. My inclination, my Lord, diſpoſes me to obey you;—but I have ſo lately been accuſtomed to obey him, that *cuſtom* inclines me to obey him ſtill.

Sir Robert. There! There! There, my Lord! Now I hope you will underſtand better for the future, and not attempt to interfere between a man and his wife.

Lord Norland, to her. Be explicit in your anſwer to this queſtion——Will you conſent to be his wife?

Miſs Wooburn. No, never.

Sir Robert. Zounds, my Lord, now you are hurrying matters.—You ſhould do it by gentle means;—let me aſk her gently. [*With a moſt ſoft voice*] Maria, Maria, will you be my wife once again?

Miſs Wooburn. Never.

Sir Robert. So you ſaid ſeven years ago when I aſked you, and yet you conſented.

Lord Norland. And now, Sir Robert, you have had your anſwer; leave my houſe. [*Going up to him.*]

Sir Robert. Yes, Sir; but not without my other half.

Lord Norland. "Your other half?"

Sir Robert. Yes; the wife of my boſom—the wife, whom I ſwore at the altar "to love and to cheriſh, "and, forſaking all others, cleave only to her as long "as we both ſhould live."

Lord

Lord Norland. You broke your oath, and made the contract void.

Sir Robert. But I am ready to make another oath, and another after that, and another after that—And, Oh, my dear Maria, be propitious to my vows, and give me hopes you will again be mine. [*He goes to her, and kneels in the moſt ſupplicating attitude.*]

Enter EDWARD, *ſhewing in Mr.* SOLUS *and Mr.* PLACID; Edward *points to Sir* Robert *(who has his back to them) and goes off.*

Sir Robert, [*Still on his knees, and not perceiving their entrance.*]

I cannot live without you.—Receive your penitent huſband, thus humbly acknowledging his faults, and imploring you to accept him once again.

Solus, Going up to Sir Robert. Now is it wonderful that I ſhould want a wife?

Placid. And is it to be wondered at, if I ſhould heſitate about parting with mine?

Sir Robert, Starts up in great confuſion. Mr. Solus, Mr. Placid, I am highly diſpleaſed that my private actions ſhould be thus inſpected.

Solus. No one ſhall perſuade me now, to live a day without a wife.

Placid. And no one ſhall perſuade me now, not to be content with my own.

Solus. I will procure a ſpecial licence, and marry the firſt woman I meet.

Sir Robert. Mr. Solus, you are, I believe, intereſted in a peculiar manner, about the marriage of this Lady.

Solus. And, poor man, you are ſick, and want ſomebody to "bathe your temples," and to "hover "about you."

Miſs Wooburn. You come in moſt opportunely, my dear Mr. Solus, to be a witneſs——

Sir Robert. "My dear Mr. Solus!"

Solus. To be a witneſs, Madam, that a man is miſerable without a wife. I have been a fatal inſtance of that, for ſome time.

Miſs Wooburn. Come to me then, and receive a leſſon.

Sir Robert. No, Madam, he ſhall not come to you; nor ſhall he receive a leſſon. No one ſhall receive a leſſon from you, but me.

Lord Norland. Sir Robert, one would ſuppoſe by this extraordinary behaviour, you were jealous.

Sir Robert. And ſo I am, my Lord; I have cauſe to be ſo.

Lord Norland. No cauſe to be jealous of Mr. Solus—He is not Miſs Wooburn's lover, I aſſure you.

Sir Robert. Then, my Lord, I verily believe it is yourſelf. Yes, I can ſee it is; I can ſee it by her eyes, and by every feature in your face.

Miſs Wooburn. Oh! my good friend, Mr. Placid, only liſten to him.

Sir Robert. And why "my good friend, Mr. Placid?" [*To* Placid. By Heavens, Sir, I believe that you only wiſhed to get rid of your own wife, in order to marry mine.

Placid. I do not wiſh to part with my own wife, Sir Robert, ſince what I have juſt ſeen.

Sir Robert, Going up to Solus *and Lord* Norland. Then, pray, gentlemen, be ſo good as to tell me, which of you two is the happy man, that I may know how to conduct myſelf towards him?

Miſs Wooburn. Ha, ha, ha!

Sir Robert. Do you inſult me, Maria?—Oh! have pity on my ſufferings.

Solus. If you have a mind to kneel down again, we will go out of the room.

Placid.

Placid. Juſt as I was comforting myſelf with the proſpect of a divorce, I find my inſtructor and director pleading on his knees to be remarried.

Enter Mrs. PLACID.

Mrs. Placid. What were you ſaying about a divorce?

Sir Robert. Now, down on your knees, and beg pardon.

Miſs Wooburn. My dear Mrs. Placid, if this viſit is to me, I take it very kind.

Mrs. Placid. Not abſolutely to you, my dear. I ſaw Mr. Placid's carriage at the door, and ſo I ſtepped in to deſire him to go home. Go home directly.

Placid. Preſently, my dear; I will go preſently.

Mrs. Placid. Preſently won't do; I ſay directly. There is a lady at my houſe in the greateſt poſſible diſtreſs [*whiſpers him*]—Lady Eleanor—I never ſaw a creature in ſuch diſtraction; [*Raiſing her voice*]—therefore go home this moment; you ſha'n't ſtay an inſtant longer.

Solus. Egad, I don't know whether I will marry or no.

Mrs. Placid. Why don't you go, Mr. Placid, when I bid you?

Solus. No;—I think I won't marry.

Placid. But, my dear, will not you go home with me?

Mrs. Placid. Did not I tell you to go by yourſelf?

[Placid *bows, and goes off.*

Solus. No;—I am ſure I won't marry.

Lord Norland. And now, Mr. Solus and Sir Robert, theſe ladies may have ſome private converſation. Do me the favour to leave them alone.

Miſs Woodburn. My Lord, with your leave *we* will retire. [*Turns when ſhe gets to the door.*] Sir Robert, I have remained in your company, and compelled myſelf to the painful taſk of hearing all you have had to ſay, merely for the ſatisfaction of expoſing your love, and then enjoying the triumph of bidding you farewell for ever.

[*Exit with Mrs.* Placid.

Solus, [*Looking ſtedfaſtly at Sir* Robert.]

He turns pale at the thoughts of loſing her. Yes, I think I'll marry.

Lord Norland. Come, Sir Robert, it is in vain to loiter; your doom is fixed.

Sir Robert. [*In a melancholy muſing tone.*]

Shall I then never again know what it is to have a heart like her's, to repoſe my troubles on?

Solus. Yes, I am pretty ſure I'll marry.

Sir Robert.—A friend in all my anxieties, a companion in all my pleaſures, a phyſician in all my ſickneſſes—

Solus. Yes, I *will* marry.

Lord Norland. Come, come, Sir Robert, do not let you and I have any diſpute.

[*Leading him towards the door.*]

Sir

Sir Robert. Senſeleſs man, not to value thoſe bleſſings—Not to know how to eſtimate them, till they were loſt.

[*Lord* Norland *leads him off.*

Solus, following. Yes,—I am determined;—nothing ſhall prevent me—I will be married.

[*Exit.*

END OF THE FOURTH ACT.

ACT V.

SCENE I. *An Apartment at Lord* NORLAND'S.

Enter HAMMOND, *followed by Lady* ELEANOR.

Hammond. My Lord is buſily engaged, Madam; I do not ſuppoſe he would ſee any one, much leſs a ſtranger.

Lady Eleanor. I am no ſtranger.

Hammond. Your name then, Madam?

Lady Eleanor. That, I cannot ſend in. But tell him, Sir, I am the afflicted wife of a man, who for ſome weeks paſt has given many fatal proofs of a diſordered mind. In one of theſe fits of phrenſy, he held an inſtrument of death, meant for his own deſtruction, to the breaſt of your Lord (who by accident that moment paſſed), and took from him, what he vainly hoped might preſerve his own life, and relieve the wants of his family. But his paroxyſm over, he ſhrunk from what he had done, and gave the whole he had thus unwarrantably taken, into a ſervant's hands to be returned to its lawful owner. The man, admitted to this confidence, betrayed his truſt, and inſtead of giving up what was ſo ſacredly delivered to him, ſecreted it; and, to obtain the promiſed reward, came to this houſe, but to inform againſt the wretched offender; who now, only reſting on your Lord's clemency, can eſcape the direful fate he has incurred.

Ham-

Hammond. Madam, the account you give, makes me intereſted in your behalf, and you may depend, I will repeat it all with the greateſt exactneſs.

[*Exit* Hammond.

Lady Eleanor. [*Lo'ing around her.*]

This is my father's houſe! It is only through two rooms and one ſhort paſſage, and there he is ſitting in his ſtudy. Oh! in that ſtudy, where I (even in the midſt of all his buſineſs) have been ſo often welcome; where I have urged the ſuit of many an unhappy perſon, nor ever urged in vain. Now I am not permitted to ſpeak for myſelf, nor have one friendly voice to do that office for me, which I have ſo often undertaken for others.

Re enter HAMMOND, EDWARD *following.*

Hammond. My Lord ſays, that any petition concerning the perſon you come about, is in vain His reſpect for the laws of his country demands an example ſuch as he means to make.

Lady Eleanor. Am I, am I to deſpair then? [*To* Hammond] Dear Sir, would you go once more to him, and humbly repreſent ———

Hammond. I ſhould be happy to oblige, but I dare not take any more meſſages to my Lord; he has given me my anſwer.—If you will give me leave, Madam, I'll ſee you to the door.

[*Croſſes to the other ſide, and Exit.*

Lady Eleanor. Miſery—Diſtraction!—Oh, Mr. Placid! Oh, Mr. Harmony! Are theſe the hopes you gave me, could I have the boldneſs to enter this houſe? But you would neither of you undertake to bring me here!—neither of you undertake to ſpeak for me!

[*She*

[*She is following the Servant*; Edward *walks ſoftly after her, till ſhe gets near the door*; *he then takes hold of her gown, and gently pulls it*; *ſhe turns and looks at him*]

Edward. Shall I ſpeak for you, Madam?

Lady Eleanor. Who are you, pray, young Gentleman? Is it you, whom Lord Norland has adopted for his ſon?

Edward. I believe he has, Madam; but he has never told me ſo yet.

Lady Eleanor. I am obliged to you for your offer; but my ſuit is of too much conſequence for *you* to undertake.

Edward. I know what your ſuit is, Madam, becauſe I was with my Lord when Hammond brought in your meſſage; and I was ſo ſorry for you, I came out on purpoſe to ſee you—and, without ſpeaking to my Lord, I could do you a great kindneſs—if I durſt.

Lady Eleanor. What kindneſs?

Edward. But I durſt not—No, do not aſk me.

Lady Eleanor. I do not. But you have raiſed my curioſity; and in a mind ſo diſtracted as mine, it is cruel to excite one additional pain.

Edward. I am ſure I would not add to your grief for the world.—But then, pray do not ſpeak of what I am going to ſay.—I heard my Lord's lawyer tell him juſt now, "that as he ſaid he ſhould not know the perſon again, who committed the offence about which you came, and as the man who informed againſt him was gone off, there could be no evidence that he did the action, but from a book, a particular pocket-book of my Lord's, which he forgot to deliver to his ſervant with the notes and money to return, and which was found upon him at your houſe: and this, Lord Norland will affirm to be his."—Now, if I did not think I was doing wrong, this is the very book—[*Takes a pocket-book from his pocket*] I took it from my

my Lord's table;—but it would be doing wrong, or I am ſure I wiſh you had it.

[*Looking wiſhfully at her.*

Lady Eleanor. It will ſave my life, my huſband's and my children's.

Edward, trembling. But what is to become of me?

Lady Eleanor. That Providence, who never puniſhes the deed, unleſs the *will* be an accomplice, ſhall protect you for ſaving one, who has only erred in a moment of diſtraction.

Edward. I never did any thing to offend my Lord in my life;—and I am in ſuch fear of him, I did not think I ever ſhould.—Yet, I cannot refuſe *you*;—take it.—[*Gives her the book.*] But pity me, when my Lord ſhall know of it.

Lady Eleanor. Oh! ſhould he diſcard you for what you have done, it will embitter every moment of my remaining life.

Edward. Do not frighten yourſelf about that.—I think he loves me too well to diſcard me quite.

Lady Eleanor. Does he indeed?

Edward I think he does;—for often, when we are alone, he preſſes me to his boſom ſo fondly, you would not ſuppoſe.—And, when my poor nurſe died, ſhe called me to her bed-ſide, and told me (but pray keep it a ſecret)—ſhe told me I was—his grand-child.

Lady Eleanor. You are—you are his grand-child—I ſee,—I feel you are;—for I feel that I am your mother. [*Embraces him.*] Oh! take the evidence back [*returning the book*]—I cannot receive it from thee, my child;—no, let us all periſh, rather than my boy, my only boy, ſhould do an act to ſtain his conſcience, or to loſe his grand father's love.

Edward. What do you mean?

Lady Eleanor. The name of the perſon with whom you lived in your infancy, was Heyland?

Edward. It was.

Lady

Lady Eleanor. I am your mother; Lord Norland's only child, [Edward *kneels*] who, for one act of diſobedience, have been driven to another part of the globe in poverty, and forced to leave you, my life, behind. [*She embraces and raiſes him.*] Your father, in his ſtruggles to ſupport us all, has fallen a victim;—but Heaven, which has preſerved my child, will ſave my huſband, reſtore his ſenſe, and once more———

Edward, [*ſtarting.*] I hear my Lord's ſtep,—he is coming this way:—Begone, mother, or we are all undone.

Lady Eleanor. No, let him come—for though his frown ſhould kill me, yet muſt I thank him for his care of thee.

[*She advances towards the door to meet him.*

Enter Lord NORLAND.

[*Falling on her knees.*] You love me,—'tis in vain to ſay you do not: You love my child; and with whatever hardſhips you have dealt, or ſtill mean to deal by me, I will never ceaſe to think you love me, nor ever ceaſe my gratitude for your goodneſs.

Lord Norland. Where are my ſervants? Who let this woman in?

[*She riſes, and retreats from him alarmed and confuſed.*

Edward. Oh, my Lord, pity her.—Do not let me ſee her hardly treated—Indeed I cannot bear it.

Enter HAMMOND.

Lord Norland, to Lady Eleanor. What was your errand here? If to ſee your child, take him along with you.

Lady

Lady Eleanor. I came to ſee my father;—I have a houſe too full of ſuch as he already.

Lord Norland. How did ſhe gain admittance?

Hammond. With a petition, which I repeated to your Lordſhip.

[*Exit* Hammond.

Lord Norland. Her huſband then it was, who—[*To Lady* Eleanor] But let him know, for this boy's ſake, I will no longer purſue him.

Lady Eleanor. For that boy's ſake you will not purſue his father; but for whoſe ſake are you ſo tender of that boy? 'Tis for mine, for my ſake; and by that I conjure you—[*Offers to kneel.*]

Lord Norland. Your praversare vain—[*To* Edward. Go, take leave of your mother *for ever*, and inſtantly follow me; or ſhake hands with me for the laſt time, and inſtantly begone with her.

[Edward *ſtands between them in doubt for ſome little time: looks alternately at each with emotions of affection; at laſt goes to his grandfather, and takes hold of his hand.*]

Edward. Farewell, my Lord,—it almoſt breaks my heart to part from you;—but, if I have my choice, I muſt go with my mother.

[*Exit Lord* Norland *inſtantly.*

[*Lady* Eleanor *and her Son go off on the oppoſite ſide.*

SCENE II. *Another Apartment at Lord* NORLAND'S.

Enter Miſs WOODBURN *and Mrs.* PLACID.

Mrs. Placid. Well, my dear, farewell.—I have ſtaid a great while longer than I intended—I certainly forgot

forgot to tell Mr. Placid to come back after he had ſpoken with Lady Eleanor, or he would not have taken the liberty not to have come.

Miſs Wooburn. How often have I lamented the fate of Lord Norland's daughter! But, luckily, I have no perſonal acquaintance with her, or I ſhould probably feel a great deal more on her account than I do at preſent.—She had quitted her father's houſe before I came to it.

Enter Mr. HARMONY.

Harmony. My whole life is paſſed in endeavouring to make people happy, and yet they won't let me.—I flattered myſelf, that after I had reſigned all pretenſions to you, Miſs Wooburn, in order to accommodate Sir Robert—that, after I had told both my Lord and him, in what high eſtimation they ſtood in each other's opinion, they would of courſe be friends; or, at leaſt, not have come to any deſperate quarrel:—inſtead of which, what have they done, but, within this hour, had a duel!—and poor Sir Robert——

Miſs Wooburn. For Heaven's ſake, tell me of Sir Robert——

Harmony. You were the only perſon he mentioned after he received his wound; and ſuch encomiums as he uttered——

Miſs Wooburn. Good Heaven! If he is in danger, it will be vain to endeavour to conceal what I ſhall ſuffer.

[*Retires a few paces to conceal her emotions.*]

Mr. Placid. Was my huſband there?

Harmony. He was one of the ſeconds.

Mrs. Placid. Then he ſhall not ſtir out of his houſe this month for it.

Harmony. He is not likely; for he is hurt too.

Mrs. Placid. A great deal hurt?

Harmony. Don't alarm yourſelf.

Mrs. Placid. I don't.

Harmony.

Harmony. Nay, if you had heard what he ſaid!

Mrs Placid. What did he ſay?

Harmony. How tenderly he ſpoke of you to all his friends——

Mrs. Placid. But what did he ſay?

Harmony. He ſaid you had imperfections.

Mrs. Placid. Then he told a falſehood

Harmony. But he acknowledged they were ſuch as only evinced a ſuperior underſtanding to the reſt of your ſex;—and that your heart——

Mrs. Placid. [*Burſting into tears.*] I am ſure I am very ſorry that any misfortune has happened to him, poor, ſilly man! But I do not ſuppoſe [*drying up her tears at once*] he will die.

Harmony. If you will behave kind to him, I ſhould ſuppoſe not.

Mrs. Placid. Mr. Harmony, if Mr. Placid is either dying or dead, I ſhall behave with very great tenderneſs; but if I find him alive and likely to live, I will lead him ſuch a life as he has not led a long time.

Harmony. Then you mean to be kind? But, my dear Miſs Wooburn, [*going to her*] why this ſeeming grief? Sir Robert is ſtill living; and ſhould he die of his wounds, you may at leaſt conſole yourſelf, that it was not your cruelty which killed him.

Miſs Wooburn. Rather than have ſuch a weight on my conſcience, I would comply with the moſt extravagant of his deſires, and ſuffer *his* cruelty to be the death of me.

Harmony. If thoſe are your ſentiments, it is my advice that you pay him a viſit in his affliction.

Miſs Wooburn. Oh no, Mr. Harmony, I would not for the univerſe. Mrs. Placid, do you think it would be proper?

Mrs. Placid. No, I think it would not—Conſider, my dear, you are no longer a wife, but a ſingle Lady, and would you run into the clutches of a man?

Harmony. He has no clutches, Madam; he is ill in bed, and totally helpleſs—But, upon recollection,

it would, perhaps, be needleſs to go; for he may be too ill to admit you.

Miſs Wooburn. If that is the caſe, all reſpect to my ſituation, my character, ſinks before the ſtrong deſire of ſeeing him once more. Oh! were I even married to another, I feel, that in ſpite of all my private declarations, or public vows, I ſhould fly from him, to pay my duty where it was firſt plighted.

Harmony. My coach is at the door; ſhall I take you to his houſe? Come, Mrs. Placid, wave all ceremonious motives on the preſent melancholy occaſion, and go along with Miſs Wooburn and me.

Miſs Wooburn. But, Mrs. Placid, perhaps poor Mr. Placid is in want of your attendance at home.

Harmony. No, they were both carried in the ſame carriage to Sir Robert's.

Miſs Wooburn, [*As* Harmony *leads her to the door*] Oh! how I long to ſee my dear huſband, that I may conſole him!

Mrs. Placid. Oh! how I long to ſee my dear huſband, that I may quarrel with him! [*Exeunt.*

SCENE III. *The Hall at Sir* ROBERT RAMBLE'S.

The PORTER *diſcovered aſleep.*

Enter a FOOTMAN.

Footman. Porter, porter, how can you ſleep at this time of the day?—It is only eight o'clock.

Porter. What did you want, Mr. William?

Footman. To tell you my maſter muſt not be diſturbed, and ſo you muſt not let in a ſingle creature.

Porter. Mr. William, this is no leſs than the third time I have received thoſe orders within this half hour:—Firſt, from the butler, then from the valet, and now from the footman.—Do you all ſuppoſe I am ſtupid?

Footman. I was bid to tell you. I have only done what I was deſired; and mind you do the ſame. [*Exit.*

Porter.

Porter. I'll do my duty, I warrant you. I'll do my duty. [*A loud rapping at the door*] And there's a rap to put my duty to the trial. [*Opens the door.*

Enter HARMONY, *Miſs* WOOBURN, *and Mrs.* PLACID.

Harmony. Theſe ladies come on a viſit to Sir Robert. Deſire one of the ſervants to conduct them to him inſtantly.

Porter. Indeed, Sir, that is impoſſible—My maſter is not———

Harmony. We know he is at home, and therefore we can take no denial.

Porter. I own he is at home, Sir; but indeed he is not in a ſituation———

Miſs Wooburn. We know his ſituation.

Porter. Then, Madam, you muſt ſuppoſe he is not to be diſturbed. I have ſtrict orders not to let in a ſingle ſoul.

Harmony. This Lady, you muſt be certain, is an exception.

Porter. No Lady can be an exception in my maſter's preſent ſtate; for I believe, Sir, but perhaps I ſhould not ſpeak of it, I believe my maſter is nearly gone.

Miſs Wooburn. Oh! ſupport me Heaven!

Mrs. Placid. But has he his ſenſes?

Porter. Not very clearly, I believe.

Miſs Wooburn. Oh! Mr. Harmony, let me ſee him before they are quite loſt.

Porter. It is as much as my place is worth, to let a creature farther than the hall; for my maſter is but in the next room.

Mrs. Placid. That is a dining-room. Is not he in bed?

Harmony. [*Aſide to the Ladies*] In caſes of wounds, the patient is oftentimes propped up in his chair.

Miſs Wooburn. Does he talk at all?

Porter. Yes, Madam, I heard him juſt now very loud.

Miſs Wooburn, [*liſtening.*] I think I hear him rave.

Harmony No, that murmuring is the voice of other perſons.

Mrs. Placid. The Doctors in conſultation, I apprehend.—Has he taken any thing?

Porter. A great deal, I believe, Madam.

Mrs. Placid. No amputation, I hope?

Porter. What, Madam?

Harmony He does not underſtand you. [*To Miſs* Wooburn.—Come, will you go back?

Porter. Do, my Lady, and call in the morning.

Miſs Wooburn. By that time he may be totally inſenſible, and die without knowing how much I am attached to him.

Mrs. Placid. And my huſband may die without knowing how much I am enraged with him!—Mr. Harmony, never mind this fooliſh man, but force your way into the next room.

Porter. Indeed, Sir, you muſt not. Pray, Mr. Harmony, pray, Ladies, go away.

Miſs Wooburn. Yes, I muſt go from my huſband's houſe for ever; never to ſee that, or him again.

[*Faints on Mr.* Harmony.

Mr. Placid She is fainting—open the windows—give her air.

Porter. Pray go away:—There is plenty of air in the ſtreets, Ma'am.

Harmony. Scoundrel! Your impertinence is inſupportable. Open theſe doors; I inſiſt on their being opened.

[*He thruſts at a door in the centre of the ſtage; it opens, and diſcovers Sir* Robert *and Mr.* Placid *at a table ſurrounded by a company of Gentlemen.*]

Sir Robert. A ſong—a ſong—another ſong——

Miſs

[*Miſs* Wooburn, *all aſtoniſhment, is ſupported by Mr.* Harmony *and Mrs.* Placid—*the* Porter *runs off.*]

Oh! what do I ſee!—Women! Ladies! Celeſtial beings we were talking of.—Can this be real? [*Sir* Robert *and Mr.* Placid *come forward—Sir* Robert *perceiving it is Miſs* Wooburn, *turns himſelf to the company*] Gentlemen, Gentlemen, married men and ſingle men, hear me thus publicly renounce every woman on earth but this; and ſwear henceforward to be devoted to none but my own wife.

[*Goes to her in raptures.*

Placid. [*Looking at Mrs.* Placid, *then turning to the Company.*]

Gentlemen, Gentlemen, married men and ſingle men, hear me thus publicly declare, I will henceforth be maſter;—and from this time forward, will be obeyed by my wife. [*Sir* Robert *waves his hand, and the door is cloſed on the company of Gentlemen*]

Mrs. Placid. Mr. Placid—Mr. Placid, are not you afraid?

Placid. No, Madam;—I have conſulted my friends, I have drank two bottles of wine, and I never intend to be afraid again.

Miſs Wooburn, [*to Sir Robert.*] Can it be, that I ſee you without a wound?

Sir Robert. No, my life, that you do not; for I have a wound through my heart, which none but you can cure. But in deſpair of your aid, I have flown to wine, to give me a temporary relief by the loſs of reflection.

Mrs. Placid. Mr. Placid, you will be ſober in the morning.

Placid. Yes, my dear; and I will take care that you ſhall be dutiful in the morning.

Harmony. For ſhame! How can you treat Mrs. Placid thus? You would not, if you knew what kind things ſhe has been ſaying of you; and how anxious ſhe was when I told her you were wounded in a duel.

Mrs. Placid. Was not I, Mr. Harmony? [*Burſting into tears.*

Placid, [*Aſide to* Harmony *and Sir* Robert. I did not know ſhe could cry;—I never ſaw it before, and it has made me ſober in an inſtant.

Miſs Wooburn. Mr. Placid, I rely on you to conduct me immediately from this houſe.

Sir Robert. That I proteſt againſt; and will uſe even violent meaſures to prevent it.

Enter SERVANT.

Servant. Lord Norland.

Enter Lord NORLAND.

Miſs Wooburn. He will protect me.

Sir Robert. Who ſhall protect you in my houſe but I? My Lord, ſhe is under my protection; and if you offer to take her from me, I'll exert the authority of a huſband, and lock her up.

Lord Norland, [*to Miſs Wooburn.*] Have you been deluded hither, and wiſh to leave the place with me? Tell me inſtantly, that I may know how to act.

Miſs Wooburn. My Lord, I am ready to go with you, but———

Harmony —But you find ſhe is inclined to ſtay; and do have ſome compaſſion upon two people that are ſo fond of you.

Enter Mr. SOLUS, *dreſt in a ſuit of white clothes.*

Solus. I am married!—I am married!—Wiſh me joy! I am married!

Sir Robert. I cannot give you joy, for envy.

Solus. Nay, I do not know whether you will envy me much when you ſee my ſpouſe—I cannot ſay ſhe was exactly my choice. However, ſhe is my wife now; and that is a name ſo endearing, I think I love her better ſince the ceremony has been performed.

Mrs.

Mrs. Placid. And pray, when did it take place?

Solus. This moment. We are now returning from a friend's houſe, where we have been joined; and I felt myſelf ſo happy, I could not paſs Sir Robert's door, without calling to tell him of my good fortune.—And, as I ſee your Lady here, Sir Robert, I gueſs you are juſt married too; and ſo I'll hand my wife out of the carriage, and introduce the two Brides to each other. [*Exit* Solus.

Sir Robert. You ſee, my Lord, what conſtruction Mr. Solus has put on this Lady's viſit to me. And by Heaven, if you take her away, it will be ſaid, that ſhe came and offered herſelf, and that I rejected her!

Miſs Wooburn. Such a report would kill me.

Enter SOLUS, *leading on Miſs* SPINSTER.

Solus. Miſtreſs Solus. [*Introducing her.*

Harmony, [*ſtarting.*] My Relation! Dear Madam, by what ſtrange turn of fortune do I ſee you become a wife?

Mrs. Solus. Mr. Harmony, it is a weakneſs I acknowledge; but you can never want an excuſe for me, when you call to mind "the ſcarcity of proviſions."

Solus. Mr. Harmony, I have loved her ever ſince you told me ſhe ſpoke ſo well of me behind my back.

Enter SERVANT,

And whiſpers Mr. HARMONY, *who follows him off.*

Lord Norland. I agree with you, Mr. Solus, that this is a moſt excellent proof of a perſon's diſpoſition; and in conſideration, Sir Robert, that, throughout all our many diſagreements, you have ſtill preſerved a reſpect for my character in my abſence, I do at laſt ſay to that Lady, ſhe has my conſent to truſt you again.

Sir Robert. And ſhe will truſt me; I ſee it in her ſmiles. Oh! unexpected ecſtaſy!

Enter Mr. HARMONY.

Harmony, [*Holding a letter in his hand.*] Amidſt thoſe bright proſpects of joy which this company are contemplating, I come to announce an event that ought to cloud the ſplendour of the horizon.—A worthy, but an ill-fated man, whom ye were all acquainted with, has juſt breathed his laſt.

Lord Norland. Do you mean the huſband of my daughter?

Solus. Do you mean my nephew?

Placid. Is it my friend?

Sir Robert. And my old acquaintance?

Harmony. Did Mr. Irwin poſſeſs all thoſe titles you have given him, Gentlemen? Was he your ſon? [*To Lord* Norland] Your nephew? [*To Solus*] Your friend? [*To Mr.* Placid] And your old acquaintance? [*To Sir* Robert]—How ſtrange he did not know it!

Placid. He did know it.

Harmony. Still more ſtrange that he ſhould die for want, and not apply to any of you!

Solus. What! Die for want in London! Starve in the midſt of plenty!

Harmony. No; but he ſeized that plenty, where law, where honour, where every ſocial and religious tie forbad the treſpaſs; and in puniſhment of the guilt, has become his own executioner.

Lord Norland. Then my daughter is wretched, and her boy involved in his father's infamy.

Solus. The fear of his ghoſt haunting me, will diſturb the joys of my married life.

Placid. Mrs. Placid, Mrs. Placid, my complying with your injunctions in reſpect of Mr. Irwin, will make me miſerable for ever.

Miſs Wooburn. I wiſh he had applied to me.

Sir Robert. And as I refuſed him his requeſt, I would give half my eſtate he had *not* applied to me.

Harmony. And a man who always ſpoke ſo well of you all behind your backs!—I dare ſay, that, in his dying moments, there was not one of you whom he did not praiſe for ſome virtue.

Solus.

Solus. No, no—when he was dying he would be more careful of what he said.

Lord Norland. Sir Robert, good-day. Settle your marriage as you and your Lady ſhall approve; you have my good wiſhes. But my ſpirits have received too great a ſhock to be capable of any other impreſſion at preſent.

Miſs Woodburn. [*Holding him.*] Nay, ſtay, my Lord.

Solus. And, Mrs. Solus, let me hand you into your carriage to your company; but excuſe my going home with you. *My* ſpirits have received too great a ſhock, for me to be capable of any other impreſſion at preſent.

Harmony, Stopping Solus.] Now, ſo loth am I to ſee any of you, only for a moment, in grief, while I have the power to relieve you, that I cannot help—Yes, my philanthropy will get the better of my juſtice.

[*Goes to the door, and leads on Lady* Eleanor, Irwin, *and* Edward.]

Lord Norland. [*Runs to Irwin, and embraces him.*] My ſon! [Irwin *falls on his knees.*] I take a ſhare in all your offences—The worſt of accomplices, while I impelled you to them.

Irwin. [*On his knees.*] I come to offer my returning reaſon; to offer you my vows, that, while *that* reaſon continue, ſo long will I be penitent for the phrenſy which put your life in danger.

Lady Eleanor. [*Moving timidly to her Father, leading Edward by the hand.*]

I come to offer you this child, this affectionate child; who, in the midſt of our careſſes, droops his head and pines for your forgiveneſs.

Lord Norland. Ah! there is a corner of my heart left to receive him. [*Embraces him.*]

Edward. Then, pray, my Lord, ſuffer the corner to be large enough to hold my mother.

Lord Norland. My heart is ſoftened, and receives you all. [*Embraces Lady* Eleanor, *who falls on her knees; he then turns to* Harmony]—Mr. Harmony, I thank

thank you, I moſt ſincerely thank you for this, the joyfulleſt moment of my life. I not only experience releaſe from miſery, but return to happineſs.

Harmony, [*Goes haſtily to Solus, and leads him to Irwin; then turns to Mr. and Mrs. Placid.*]

And now, that I ſee you all reconciled, I can ſay, there are not two enemies in the whole circle of my acquaintance, that I have not within theſe three days made friends.

Sir Robert. Very true, Harmony; for we ſhould never have known half how well we all love one another, if you had not told us.

Harmony. And yet, my good friends, notwithſtanding the merit you may attribute to me, I have one moſt tremendous fault; and it weighs ſo heavy on my conſcience, I would confeſs what it is, but that you might hereafter call my veracity in queſtion.

Sir Robert. My dear Harmony, without a fault, you would not be a proper companion for any of us.

Lord Norland. And while a man like you, may have (among ſo many virtues) ſome faults; let us hope there may be found in each of us, (among all our faults) ſome virtues.

Harmony. Yes, my Lord,—and notwithſtanding all our faults, it is my ſincere wiſh, that the world may ſpeak well of us—behind our backs.

THE END.

EPI-

EPILOGUE.

By M. P. ANDREWS, Esq.

Spoken by Mrs. MATTOCKS.

"EACH has his fault," we readily allow,
To this Decree, our dearest friends must bow;
One is too careless, one is too correct,
All, save our own sweet self, has some defect:
And characters to ev'ry virtue dear,
Sink from a hint, or suffer by a sneer.

"Sir Harry Blink! Oh, he's a worthy man,
"Anxious ot do the utmost good he can;
"To aid distress, wou'd share his last poor guinea,
"Delights in kindness—but then, what a ninny!"

Lady Doll Pimrose says to Lady Sly,
"You know Miss Tidlikins? Yes—looks awry—
"She's going to be married,—that won't mend it;—
"They say she'll have a fortune,—and she'll spend it.
"I hope your La'ship visits Lady Hearty,
"We meet to-night—a most delightful party,
"I don't like Dowagers, who *would* be young,
"And 'twixt ourselves they say—She has a tongue."

If such the general blame that all awair,
Say, can our Author 'scape the general fate?
Some will dislike the saucy truths she teaches,
Fond bachelors, and wives who wear the breeches.

"Let me be wedded to a handsome youth,"
Cries old Miss Mumblelove, without a tooth.
"These worn-out Beaux, because they've heavy purses,
"Expect us, spinsters, to become their nurses.
"To love, and be beloved 's the happy wise,
"A mutual passion is the charm of life."

"Marriage is Heaven's best gift, we must believe it,
"Yet some with weak ideas can't conceive it.—
"Poor Lady Sobwell's grief the town wou'd stun;
"Oh, Tiffany! Your mistress is undone.

"Dear

EPILOGUE.

" Dear Ma'am—I hope my Lord is well—don't cry—
" Hav'n't I cauſe?—The monſter will not die—
" The reaſon why I married him, is clear,
" I fondly thought he cou'd not live a year:
" But now his dropſy's better, and his cough—
" Not the leaſt chance for that to take him off.
" I, that cou'd have young huſbands now in plenty,
" Sha'n't be a widow till I'm one and-twenty—
" No lovely weeds—No ſweet diſhevelled hair—
" Oh! I cou'd cry my eyes out in deſpair."
[*Sobbing and crying.*

Sir Triſtram Teſty, worn with age and gout;
Within, all ſpleen, and flannel all without;
Roars from his elbow-chair, " Reach me my crutches,
" Oh! if Death had my wife within his clutches,
" With what delight her funeral meats I'd gobble,
" And tho', not dance upon her grave, I'd hobble;
" No longer then, my peace ſhe could unhinge,
" I ſhould cut capers ſoon, [*tries to jump, and ſtumbles*]
Zounds! What a twinge!'——

Theſe playful pictures of diſcordant life,
We bring to combat diſcontent and ſtrife,
And, by the force of contraſt, ſweetly prove
The charm that waits on fond and faithful love;
When ſuited years, and pliant tempers join,
And the heart glows with energy divine,
As the lov'd offspring of the happy pair
Oft climb the knee, the envied kiſs to ſhare.

Such joy, this happy country long has known,
Rear'd in the Cot, reflected from the Throne;
Oh! may the glorious zeal, the loyal ſtand
Which nobly animate this envied land,
Secure to every breaſt, with glad increaſe,
The heartfelt bleſſings of domeſtic peace!

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MAY

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